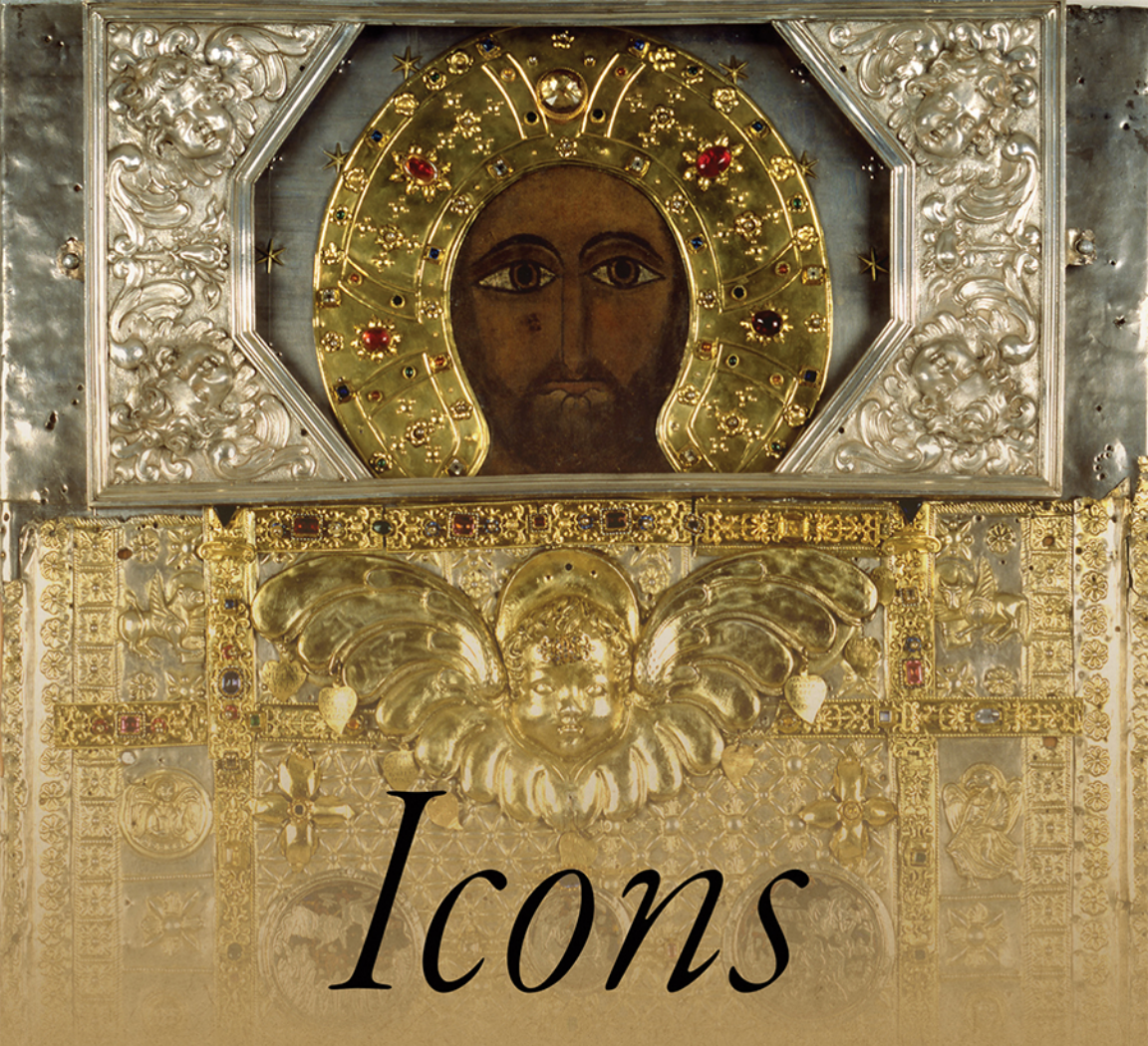

Icons

AND THE LITURGY, EAST AND WEST

HISTORY, THEOLOGY, AND CULTURE

EDITED BY

Nicholas Denysenko

Icons and the Liturgy, East and West

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Nicholas Denysenko

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Introduction

NICHOLAS DENYSENKO

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God,
who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

—John 1:18 (NAB)

Sacred icons and other works of art appeal to diverse peoples. Throughout the world, one beholds crosses everywhere. Crosses decorate the domes of churches and dot skylines, they fill cemeteries and mausoleums, they adorn the necks of men, women, and children, they appear as tattoos on arms, legs, and other body parts, and they hang from rearview mirrors, offering protection to drivers. Christian clergy and faithful have small crosses that they use in prayer and ritual; it is common to see Eastern Christians bowing before and kissing crosses. Statues and other three-dimensional depictions of Jesus, Mary, John the Baptist, and holy men and women join the chorus of faithful and offer praise to God in churches throughout the world. In urban areas, these statues humbly absorb punishment from birds and other creatures, yet they stand watch and witness to life in the city. Holy objects cross the

border from the carefully designated sacred spaces belonging to the Church into the world's chaos. Film writers use crosses as objects in stories for good and evil purposes. It is now common to view films that offer brief shots of two-dimensional painted objects called "icons."

Icons are largely deemed an Eastern Christian phenomenon, though Western churches permit the use of icons to varying degrees. Tradition maintains that St. Luke the Evangelist was the Church's first iconographer. Icons, frescoes, and mosaics of Jesus and Mary populate the walls of numerous churches in the Middle East and Europe, and Ethiopia and Eritrea have developed their own native iconographic traditions. Icons are holy objects and not without controversy. Some in the Byzantine Empire opposed the veneration of icons, finding fault with the practice of venerating icons because it appeared to violate the precept of the Decalogue that prohibits worship of graven images. The opponents of icon veneration (iconoclasts) asserted that the only appropriate holy objects for veneration are the eucharistic body and blood of Christ and the three-dimensional images of the cross. Two historical events represent the struggle for truth in icon veneration: the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, which approved and promoted icon veneration, and the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. The fifty-six years separating the two events that authorized and sanctioned icon veneration elucidate just how contentious this disagreement was.

Byzantine monasteries led the victory of the "iconodules," symbolized by influential apologetic treatises written by the renowned monks Theodore the Studite and John of Damascus.[1] In this so-called Middle Byzantine period, liturgical life in the Byzantine capital and its periphery began to evolve in a new direction, when each component of sacred space in the church interior and exterior came to be decorated with icons. The gem-encrusted cross that hung from the central dome in Constantinople's Hagia Sophia was replaced by an icon of the risen Jesus, the Pantocrator. The Mother of God praying (*Theotokos Oranta*) came to occupy the second most prominent space in the church, the apse of the sanctuary. Saints, angels, and events from the scriptures and New Testament communicated to a largely illiterate populace the events of salvation history. Liturgical historians note that iconography's new hegemony in worship came to influence the eucharistic prepara-

tory rite, with the *prosphora* arranged in order of the Christian cosmos, following the pattern of the iconographic program in the sacred space of the temple. Iconographic styles varied, and when Rus' received the Byzantine rite from Constantinople, the East Slavs developed their own native iconographic style. The blend of colors and portraits of holy men and women did not merely depict but also invited the beholder—in particular, the liturgical assembly—to transcend the limits of time and cross over the plane into dialogical communion with the holy men and women who worship God with the holy angels, denoting an iconic paradigm shift from painted image to portal into the sacred space occupied by God and the fathers and mothers who have departed this life but live in Christ.

Icons offered Eastern Christians such a tangible experience of salvation history and communion with the saints, angels, Mary, and Christ that they heeded the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and decorated not only churches but also their homes with icons. Today's Eastern Christians have faithfully sustained these traditions, and it is customary for one to encounter icons on the walls of homes, in offices, on smartphones, and in other personal spaces. The role of the icon in Byzantine Christian culture has also evolved. The medieval Byzantine Church celebrated the grace produced by the figures depicted on icons, particularly Mary, who became the patron of the imperial city. One of the most famous icons depicting Mary is called *Nikopoia* (*The Maker of Victory*), and the Byzantines carried this icon into battle with the confidence that Mary would defend them from their enemies. The myth of Mary's military patronage of Constantinople resulted in a new title given to her, *Strategios* ("General"), who defends the city and its citizens.[2] Despite the Venetians' defeat of the Byzantines in 1204, Mary's place as the defender of the city and Orthodox people remained embedded in Byzantine Christian consciousness, an idea that was passed on to the Slavs, who adopted the Byzantine faith and with it Mary as their protector.

Icons were not only carried into battle and credited with making victory, but they also produced miracles. Like the relics of saints, many icons are considered wonder-working because they gush myrrh, and these oils are used to anoint the sick and impart grace for the remission

of sins. Wonder-working icons became so preponderant in Byzantine Church culture that new feasts entered the liturgical year commemorating the icon and its miracles. Copies of such icons are often made so that a local divine phenomenon can be shared with the universal church. The original icons go on the road to visit churches in various regions, drawing gatherings not only of Byzantine locals but also of numerous visitors and pilgrims.[3] In this vein, the wonder-working icon has adopted a feature that once belonged to holy relics: the transfer of relics of antiquity has given birth to a related rite—the pilgrimage of a wonder-working icon. Like the transfer of relics, the scheduling of a visit of a wonder-working icon is ecclesiological, a decision of a local church to share the blessings and grace from the holy objects of their native community with other local churches. When a local church shares an icon with multiple churches of other regions, the local phenomenon becomes universal. The American Orthodox celebration of the *Vladimir Mother of God* in the liturgical calendar is an instance of the local becoming universal, the diffusion of grace through the simple act of sharing a holy object. The icon, then, has become somewhat ubiquitous in Eastern Christian culture. Its native habitat is the church, but the icon and other holy objects, such as crosses, statues, and votive candles, venture out into the world to decorate and sanctify it. These principles apply to other holy objects equally. The function of any given holy object is not reducible to decoration.

Our abbreviated survey discloses a rich multifunctionality for sacred art and holy objects. Sacred art is decorative, but it is also liturgical, because it works in harmony with the liturgy to communicate the past (salvation history) according to an organized hierarchy. Sacred art also invites the beholder and liturgical participant to engage it as a portal, ushering faithful from the past through the present and into the future life with God. The Church's euchology, her prayers, hymns, the liturgy of the Word, and ritual gestures contribute to the motion of the faithful to behold an image of future life with God and the communion of saints, and the icons serve as portals into that future life. Moreover, this motion facilitated by Church ritual is often literal: icons and objects of sacred art are frequently removed from their appointed stations in the church and carried in procession outside of the church, an act of

the community's sanctification of the world. Sacred art is also ecclesiological: its depiction of Christ, Mary, and the communion of saints introduces one to behold an image of the kingdom of God, an image that is the *telos* of the Church living in the present. Our above reference to the repetitive copying and visitation of icons demonstrates the phenomenon of the local becoming universal without losing its grounding in the native local tradition, especially when the narrative story of a given piece of sacred art inspires beholders to make pilgrimages to the native home of the work of sacred art. Sacred art is theological. Crosses and images of Christ communicate salvation history, and, more important, they reveal God. Icons of the communion of saints have a related function: they display to the faithful one's own *telos* by functioning as a picture of the call to universal holiness. The dialogue between assembly (or individual person) and the holy man or woman depicted in a work of sacred art beckons those in the present to imitate the life of the holy one and realize the divine vocation for humanity established from the beginning: *theosis*, "to become like God." This process of becoming is enormously complex and filled with perils and failures, which is why the Church encourages the faithful to return to the icons and images over and over again, and to respond to the call to be a citizen of God's kingdom even after failures. In this instance, the theological is inseparable from the liturgical, because liturgy provides the rehearsal and the environment for the faithful to behold the theology revealed by the icons, to worship the God revealed by Christ, and to respond affirmatively to the call of universal holiness issued from the communion of saints.

A SYMPOSIUM ON SACRED ART

This introduction claims that sacred art belongs to the Church, discloses God, and builds the Church in the image of the communion of saints, which makes the liturgy the native home for sacred art. Throughout history, Christians in the world have experienced this truth and have developed styles of sacred art that draw people into the mystery of God in particular times and places. In 2013, the Huffington

Ecumenical Institute of Loyola Marymount University hosted a symposium titled Icons and Images. The Henry Luce Foundation and Virginia Farah Foundation provided grants that are sponsoring three years of symposia devoted to exploring the past, present, and future of the liturgical arts in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Icons and Images colloquy inaugurated this series, bringing together a group of enormously gifted scholars and practitioners who shared their work and research in an ecumenical spirit. Their lectures confirm that sacred art is profoundly liturgical, ecclesiological, and theological, and that it has the capacity to contribute to God's salvation of the world. This volume presents the work of eight of the scholars who lectured at the 2013 symposium in Los Angeles. The volume is organized in three thematic parts: Part 1 presents scholarly and historical analyses of Byzantine and Roman art and iconography. Part 2 offers anthropological and cultural treatments of iconography and liturgy in Armenia, Rome, and Chile. Part 3 concludes the volume with two pastoral reflections on the creative process employed by iconographers and the meaning of praying to original icons and their copies.

Robert F. Taft, the preeminent Jesuit scholar of the Byzantine liturgy, opens up part 1 of the volume by reviewing the relationship between iconography and liturgy in the Byzantine tradition. Taft surveys Byzantine theologians and sets the stage for this volume by reminding readers of two crucial truths about Byzantine iconography. First, the Byzantines did not rely on an opaque, abstract symbolic system in their iconographic programs, but rather they portrayed the narrative story of salvation in a natural, humanistic way that communicated the theology they held to be true. Second, Byzantine sacred iconography contributed to the liturgy that shaped a way of life, reminding the Byzantines, along with the contemporary reader, that there is one Church of heaven and earth, and the liturgical participants belong to the same community as the saints they venerate on the walls of their temples.

Thomas Lucas, the rector of the Jesuit community at Seattle University and accomplished sacred artist and architect, reviews the contribution of iconography in the post–Vatican II Roman Catholic tradition and presents an informative historical survey on iconography in the Roman Catholic tradition. He offers a sober analysis of the place of art

in liturgy after Vatican II, tracing iconoclastic tendencies to minimalism that originated with the liturgical movement and establishing the cultural environment for sacred artists as aligned with modernism and liberated from the strict mores of the previous epoch. Lucas points to examples of sacred art in the contemporary environment that might offer a hopeful transition to a period of reinvigoration and renewal in Catholic sacred art.

Bissera Pentcheva offers a study on the patristic interpretation of icon (*eikon*) as a designation for the vocation of the human being: to become a Christian. Pentcheva's study is of enormous value to the student and scholar of iconology because she unveils the New Testament and patristic sense of icon as animation, where the descent of the Holy Spirit animates the human being, capacitating him or her to become an anointed one (Christ). Pentcheva suggests connections between this synthesis of patristic anthropology and the liturgy that illuminate the people of the Church as being the authentic icons, or images of God.

Kirstin Noreen delivers an insightful chapter on the liturgical use of the Lateran icon of Christ in Rome as the first contribution to part 2 of the volume. Noreen unveils the ecclesial and liturgical context of the icon, but beyond her detailed description of the icon and its metal cover is an intriguing analysis of the role of the icon in the processions that occur on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary on August 14–15. Her discussion of the Lateran icon's visit to Marian icons and its reputation as a medium of protection in the local community raises important questions on the cultural significance of sacred art in urban settings. Noreen connects these central issues of sharing the power of an image by comparing it to the international phenomenon of copying and depicting images of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Christina Maranci introduces the historical and liturgical significance of sculpted reliefs at a seventh-century Armenian church in Wren, now in eastern Turkey near the Armenian border. She explores the theological significance of the sculpted reliefs by comparing them to the Armenian dedication rites of the eighth and ninth centuries. Her broadening of the liturgical context elucidates the sculpted reliefs as communicating a sense of entry into the heavenly Jerusalem upon entering a church, a precious insight into the eschatological legacy of

medieval Armenian worship communicated through audio and visual media. Maranci also reflects on other potential areas of research and the critical need to strive for the preservation of medieval Armenian edifices, which are threatened by decay from exposure to the elements.

The Jesuit scholar Dorian Llywelyn rounds out part 2 of our volume by presenting the cult of Jesus Nazareno through the lens of Chilote identity. His expertise in the dynamics of theology and national identity provide the reader with a rich background on the complex cultural and religious origins of the use of the life-size statue of Jesus Nazareno in processions and liturgy. His analysis contributes two special features. First, he offers a compelling distinction between two- and three-dimensional images and the implications of their veneration, which is also a natural line dividing Catholics and Orthodox in sacred art. Second, Llywelyn's probing analysis of Chilote identity in their devotion to the cult raises questions on the canonicity of art and its use in liturgy, since the cult of Jesus Nazareno has created tension between native Chilotes and Roman Catholic officials.

Part 3 of our volume begins with Michael Courey's informative first-person narrative on the work and vocation of the iconographer. Drawing upon his own vast experience as an apprentice who grew into a master iconographer, he outlines the meticulous process of preparing icons. His process reminds the reader that iconography is a ministry and act of worship performed not by individuals on the periphery of the Church, but by and from the people within. Courey's description of the process discloses iconography as a task belonging to liturgy: the iconographer must be attuned to the shape and language of the liturgy, and therefore must paint icons in an environment of prayer, *askesis*, and thanksgiving. He also refers the reader to several literary sources for aspiring iconographers.

Andriy Chirovsky presents the final study in this volume by addressing a crucial question on the reality of venerating icons: the validity and benefit of venerating not only copies but also copies of copies. His chapter draws our attention to the most frequent, private, and intimate ramification of venerating icons by referring to the kinds of typical icons people venerate in their homes and champion as archetypal. Chirovsky's study brings us full circle, from the iconographer and the liturgy of the Church community to the daily grind of domestic prayer.

Despite their many differences, the Catholic and Orthodox traditions are committed to preserving and furthering sacred art for the vitality of Christian life. The studies in this volume offer the reader a robust survey of select issues in the history of sacred art, and they take us on a journey around the globe, from medieval Constantinople, Rome, and Armenia, to contemporary Chile, Seattle, Los Angeles, and parts of Canada. This global tour through the history and theology of sacred images introduces the reader to the central issues addressed by Christians in iconography and sacred images, and I leave you to enjoy the expertise of our esteemed scholars. Allow me one final word as a segue to our opening quote from the Gospel according to St. John. One of the common elements revealed by our authors' diverse themes is the desire of Catholic and Orthodox communities to join the communion of saints and the chorus of those who enjoy eternal life in the triune God. My hope is that this volume will help communities separated by disputes in the past to capture an opportunity and seek God together by rejuvenating support for cultivating excellence in sacred art and liturgy.

NOTES

1. Treatises defending the veneration of icons are not limited to these two authors. Numerous proponents of icon veneration chimed in, including Germanus of Constantinople, Theodore Abu Qurrah, and others.

2. The notion that Mary defended the Byzantines was challenged during the Fourth Crusade, when the Venetians sacked, ruined, and occupied Constantinople. The Venetians captured the *Theotokos Nikopoia* icon and adopted her as their patron in military campaigns.

3. Contemporary examples of such miraculous icons include the *Vladimir Mother of God*, the Kursk Root icon, and the Hawaiian Iveron icon.

PART ONE

Scholarly and Historical Analyses

CHAPTER ONE

Icon and Image East and West

ROBERT F. TAFT, S.J.

PREAMBLE: FULL DISCLOSURE

In contemporary public or literary discourse on areas where commentators, critics, journalists, or reviewers have a personal interest and cannot pretend indifference, it is customary to begin with a "full disclosure" or "declaration of interest"—for example, "the author of the book I am reviewing is my wife." Honesty compels me to do the same here.

It is no secret that I am a specialist in the history and theology of the Byzantine and other Eastern liturgies, which I love, prefer, and to which I am in no way indifferent. That does not mean I am subjective or uncritical. It does mean that I have clear and unabashed preferences and sympathies based not on prejudice, which means negative prejudgment, but on what I call "postjudice," because after a lifetime of studying the field, I can make fair claim to know something about it. So my professional knowledge and sympathies lie chiefly on the Eastern side

of the East–West divide, and I shall have more to say about the East, which is also where my competence lies.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC WEST

Much of what is written or said about twenty-first century Western Christendom is dominated by the present-day split between Vatican II Catholic loyalists, like me, and the neocon "reformers of the reform." Their debate is concerned almost exclusively with church architecture and decoration, since the West has no iconography in the Byzantine Orthodox sense of the term. Churches in the West that do have some, like the churches and baptisteries of Ravenna or the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice, are the result of Byzantine influence in those areas: they are borrowed, not indigenous Western art. So the real Western debate historically has concerned architecture, not iconography, at least until the Baroque era when "chubby-cherub" type decoration, not iconography, was added to the church interior to liven things up. On the topic, the key study I would recommend for those interested is Anton L. Mayer, *Liturgie in der europäischen Geistesgeschichte (Liturgy in European Cultural History*),[1] begun as a series of articles in the pre–World War II *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* (1921–41), revived after the war in 1950 as the still appearing *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*. In those articles, Mayer weaves an ingenious tapestry of how changes in Western European cultural styles were mirrored step by step in art, sculpture, architecture, literature, and liturgy, as each case warranted.

In the United States, the heady renewal in the wake of Vatican II is best captured in that fresh and remarkable 1978 document *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1978). It was ghostwritten, with the collaboration of other major figures in the field,[2] by the brilliant liturgist and writer Fr. Robert W. Hovda (1920–92), a convert to Catholicism in 1943 under the influence of Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker Movement, and he spent his last years living and working in Manhattan.[3] I knew Bob well and was ecstatic over his profound and beautifully written text when it first appeared. Since then, of course,

there has been a retreat from the spirit and principles of Vatican II, on which one can read in the recent commentary in the May 28, 2012, issue of the Jesuit-produced National Catholic Weekly *America*.[4]

But I shall leave the West to those who know more about it than I, and I shall have more to say about the Byzantine East, where, as already indicated, my competency lies.

THE BYZANTINE EAST

The Formation of the Final "Byzantine Liturgical Synthesis" in the Patriarchate of Constantinople

What Orthodox Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann called the "Byzantine liturgical synthesis"[5] reached its final formation in Palaiologan Byzantium (1261–1453), the last years of the Byzantine Empire before the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, thereby laying the foundations for the perdurance of the Orthodox culture that Romanian Byzantinist Nicolas Iorga (1871–1940) famously christened *Byzance après Byzance—Byzantium after Byzantium*.[6] Palaiologan Byzantium was a contradictory epoch of political violence and social decadence—accompanied, ironically, by vital spiritual renewal.[7] This renaissance is still reflected in the Byzantine Orthodox liturgy and iconography we have today, and in the theology that explains them both.

But before doing that, let me first clear away some of the popular clichés concerning Byzantine religious culture and art that are exaggerated when not downright false.

(1) The myth that Byzantine liturgy and iconography were more spontaneous and freewheeling over against the "rubricistic legalism" of the canonically obsessed Latins. In actual fact, the observance of an established *taxis* ("order") was fundamental to the Byzantine worldview in both Church and State.

(2) The view of Byzantine church iconography as abstract and unrealistic is but another cliché. Though Byzantine iconography and liturgy are of course highly symbolic, that does not mean they are abstract,

allegorical, metaphorical. In the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, when what Hans-Joachim Schulz famously called the Byzantine rite's *Symbolgestalt* ("symbolic form") was consolidating, Byzantine liturgy and church iconography moved deliberately from the symbolic to the narrative and concrete.[8] We have allowed the Russian icon to color our views of iconography as nonrealistic, but for the Byzantines, the Greek term *eikon* meant any image.[9] As one of the greatest living Byzantinists Cyril Mango of Oxford remarks, "Our own appreciation of Byzantine art stems largely from the fact that this art is not naturalistic; yet the Byzantines themselves, judging by their extant statements, regarded it as highly naturalistic. . . . When the Patriarch Photius described a mosaic of the Virgin in St. Sophia, he praised it as a 'lifelike imitation.' The Virgin's lips 'have been made flesh by the colors,' and, though still, they were not 'incapable of speaking.'"[10] And, "The Emperor Leo VI, commenting on a mosaic of Christ in the dome of a church,[11] says that it appeared to be not a work of art, but Christ himself, who had momentarily stilled his lips."[12] Numerous other texts repeat the same topoi:[13] for the Byzantines, the portrayed figures are so lifelike they seem about to speak; a painting depicts the martyrdom of St. Euphemia as if it were happening before one's eyes, "for the artist has so clearly painted the drops of blood you might think them to be trickling down in very truth from her lips, and so you might depart weeping."[14]

So Byzantine art and ritual were in fact a very concrete attempt at portrayal, at opening a window onto the sacred, of bridging the gap.[15] As Mango remarked on the last of his three "principles of Byzantine church decoration," namely, hierarchical arrangement, selectivity, and explicitness: "The principle of explicitness was, in a sense, the repudiation of symbolism. . . . At the very end of the seventh century the Quinisext Council, in its famous Canon 82, prohibited the representation of Christ in the guise of a lamb. Instead of the symbol (*typos*), the anthropomorphic representation was to prevail. . . . The entire Iconoclastic controversy may be regarded, in this context, as the struggle between the symbol . . . and the realistic image or *eikon*. In 843 the issue was further clarified in the so-called Synodikon of Orthodoxy. . . . In other words, Byzantine religious art of the ninth century demanded realism, not symbolism."[16]

In short, Byzantine spiritual culture is far from abstract and otherworldly. As Slobodan Čurčić has written: "Religious architecture and monumental art (mosaics, fresco paintings, architectural sculpture) constitute the most palpable remains of Byzantine spirituality. Paradoxically, in their reliance on these strictly visual, physical means, the Byzantines communicated not only their deepest spiritual sensibilities but also their most sophisticated theological thoughts regarding the structure of the heavenly kingdom upon which their own empire was believed to have been modeled."[17]

So we see two contrary developments in ritual and iconography: (1) the symbolization of the concrete, as the once-functional rituals like the Little and Great Entrance processions become merely symbolic; but also (2) the concretizing of the symbolic, as iconography and liturgy move toward greater narrative explicitness.[18]

Taxis: The Byzantine Worldview

Three concepts are seminal for understanding this Byzantine liturgical and iconographic vision. The Byzantines called them *taxis*, *historia*, *theōria*. For the moment, let us translate them as "order," "rite," "contemplation."[19] First *taxis*. The Byzantines saw the *taxis* ("order") of their highly ritualized society in Neoplatonic terms: "The imperial court and ecclesiastical institutions . . . were seen as images or reflections of the celestial world."[20] "Earthly institutions, both ecclesiastical and temporal, were considered to mirror the order of the universe, the cosmic array created by God."[21] Byzantium was a conservative, backward-looking civilization, intent on continuity, not change; traditional models, not innovations, were its ideal.[22] In Byzantium, one failed to grasp this at one's own peril: "Do you not know that this *taxis* encompasses all things, as it is written?," thundered St. Symeon of Thessalonika (d. 1429). "And that God is not a God of disorder . . . but of peace and order? And that the good order in heaven is also in the Church?"[23]

Not surprisingly with such a mind-set, the Byzantines wrote books aimed at canonizing this *taxis*. This codification process, begun after the "Victory of Orthodoxy" over Iconoclasm in 843,[24] intensifies in the final centuries of Byzantium, when *diataxeis* ("liturgical ordinals")

that prescribe the proper order of the earthly liturgy begin to multiply.[25] These were not just rubric books: they conveyed the ideal image of an earthly ritual designed to mirror the heavenly ritual and order.[26] In a later period there were also manuals prescribing the proper iconographic decoration of the church, the most famous of which is the *Hermeneia* of Dionysios of Fourna (ca. 1670–1745/46).[27]

Theology of the *Taxis*

There was also a theology underlying this *taxis*. For the Byzantines, the connection between heaven and earth, "realized in the mysteries of the Trinity and Christ and in church services, icon worship, and the system of images,"[28] had its theological basis in the mystery of the Incarnation. What had once been seen as an unbridgeable gulf between the divinity and humankind[29] had, for Christians, been bridged by the eternal Word of God made flesh in the God-man Jesus.

More importantly for Byzantine culture, this also made it possible to portray the divine in icon and ritual:[30] "The defenders of the holy images founded the possibility of Christian iconography on the fact of the Incarnation of the Word."[31] As St. John Damascene (ca. 675–d. 749), "last of the Greek Fathers," taught: "In former times God, who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh . . . I make an image of the God whom I see."[32]

In other words, Byzantine Orthodox Christians base the realism of their liturgy and its iconography on faith in the reality of the permanent presence of the Risen Christ. Because the Risen Jesus is humanity glorified, he is present through his Spirit to every place and age, not only as Savior, but as saving; not only as Lord, but as priest and sacrifice and victim. This is because nothing in his being or action is ever past except the historical mode of its manifestation. Hence Jesus is not extraneous to the heavenly-earthly liturgy of the Church, but its first protagonist. As the Byzantine liturgy prays: "You are the one who offers and is offered, who receives the offering and is given back to us!"[33] In this theology, Church ritual constitutes both a *representation* and a *re-presentation*—a rendering present again—of the earthly saving work of Christ. This vision, common also to the patristic West,[34] St. Symeon of Thessalonika vests in Byzantine theological dress:

> Jesus, who is bodiless, ineffable, and cannot be apprehended, but who for our sakes assumed a body, and becoming comprehensible was "seen and conversed with men" (Bar. 3:38), remaining God, so that he might sanctify us in a twofold manner, according to that which is invisible and that which is visible. . . . And thus he transmitted the sacraments to us in a twofold form, at once visible and material, for the sake of our body, and at the same time intelligible and mystical, and filled with invisible grace for the sake of our soul. . . .[35]
>
> There is one and the same church, above and below, since God came and appeared among us, and was seen in our form and accomplished what he did for us. And the Lord's priestly activity and communion and contemplation constitute one single work, which is carried out at the same time both above and here below, but with this difference: above it is done without veils and symbols, but here it is accomplished through symbols.[36]

Taxis and Icon as One: The Byzantine Synthesis

Within the ever-shrinking remnant of the Byzantine Empire, liturgical life gradually became more indoors and private. The monastic victory over Iconoclasm (726–843) and the resultant monasticization of the offices had compressed the former splendors of the urban stational and basilical rites to within the walls of ever-smaller, cross-in-square style, mostly monastic churches.

This narrative symbolism becomes truly operative and appears in its fullness only in the "living icon" of the liturgy celebrated in a Byzantine church with its decorative iconographic programs. By obliterating the distinction between architecture and decoration, the interior of the Middle and Late Byzantine church building becomes a concrete image of the Christian vision. The surfaces of the church interior become so enveloped in this imagery that building and icon become one in evoking that vision of the Christian cosmos around which the Byzantine liturgy revolves. From the central dome, the image of the Pantocrator dominates the whole scheme, giving unity to the heavenly-earthly liturgy and salvation history themes. The movement of the former is vertical, uniting the present, worshiping community assembled in the nave with the

rest of the communion of saints depicted in the ranks of confessors, martyrs, prophets, patriarchs, and apostles, ascending to the Lord in the heavens attended by the heavenly choirs.[37]

The liturgical theme, extending upward and outward from the sanctuary, is united both artistically and theologically with the "communion of saints" theme. In fact, it is only with the liturgical theme that the symbolism of the church building comes alive. The enclosed sanctuary wherein the mysteries of the covenant are renewed is conceived as the divine abode,[38] its iconostasis enclosure as the link between heaven and earth through whose central doors grace irradiates out from heaven (the sanctuary) to earth (the nave).[39] Before these "Holy Doors"[40] the deacon, mediator between the various orders in the Church and leader of the people in their intercessions, stands at the head of the congregation, knocking at the gates of heaven through prayer.

Behind the altar on the wall of the sanctuary apse are depicted the great Fathers of the Byzantine Church, especially the "liturgical Fathers," St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom, to whom the Orthodox eucharistic liturgies are attributed.[41] They stand around the altar bowed, in the traditional posture of Byzantine liturgical prayer,[42] holding scrolls with the text of the liturgy as if concelebrating—as indeed they are—in the one liturgy of the communion of saints in heaven and on earth.[43]

Overhead, in the conch of the apse, appears the Mother of God, arms extended in the orant position, "an interceder for our salvation,"[44] sending up to the heavenly altar our worship from the altar before her in the sanctuary below (see fig. 1.1).[45] A medallion in her bosom or the Mandylion above her may depict the Christ, figure of the Incarnation that made this sacrificial intercession possible.[46]

Above this, at the summit of the arch, may be the *hetoimasía*, or "Throne of Divine Judgment,"[47] where the sacrificial mediation intercedes on our behalf, in the words of the liturgy, "for a good answer before the dread judgment seat of Christ."[48] Outside the chancel barrier, cycles of the gospel mysteries of Christ's life are depicted clockwise in a lateral band of fresco panels that extend around the walls of the church,[49] binding past salvation history into its ongoing salvific continuation in the liturgy. Within this setting, the liturgical community commemorates

Figure 1.1 *Theotokos* mosaic in the apse of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

the mystery of its redemption in union with the worship of the Heavenly Church, offering the mystery of Christ's covenant through the outstretched hands of his mother, all made visibly present in the imagery of the iconographic scheme.

The *Taxis* Contemplated

Even the unlettered worshiper, enveloped in this symbolic cocoon as clouds of earthly incense mingled with the smoking thuribles of the heavenly liturgy being imaged on earth, must have grasped something of what Symeon of Thessalonika, last of the classic Byzantine commentators of this era, meant in chapter 131 of his endless *Dialogue against All Heresies*:

> The church, as the house of God, is an image of the whole world, for God is everywhere and above everything. . . . The sanctuary is a symbol of the higher and supra-heavenly spheres, where the throne of God and His dwelling place are said to be. It is this throne that the altar represents. The heavenly hierarchies are found in many places, but here they are accompanied by priests who take their place. The bishop represents Christ, the church represents this visible world. The upper regions of the church represent the visible heavens, its lower parts what is on earth and [the earthly] paradise itself. Outside it are the lower regions and the world of beings that live not according to reason, and have no higher life. The sanctuary receives within itself the bishop, who represents the God-man Jesus whose almighty powers he shares. The other sacred ministers represent the apostles and especially the angels and archangels, each according to his order. I mention the apostles with the angels, bishops, and priests because there is only one Church, above and below.[50]

A Spirituality for the Masses

In the declining years of Byzantium this synthesis achieved its classical liturgical and artistic expression. It was the genius of St. Nicholas Cabasilas (ca. 1322/23–d. after 1391), lay mystic and humanist (he may

later have become a monk), who brought Byzantine liturgical theology back to this interior center. Cabasilas's brilliant treatises (ca. 1350), the *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* and *The Life in Christ*,[51] combine the best in humanism and hesychast spirituality to make him the classic exponent of Byzantine liturgical theology during the hesychast revival.

Cabasilas's interpretation is in no way extrinsic to the structure and meaning of the rites, nor is his contemplation a substitute for sacramental participation, but only its prelude. The Divine Liturgy, Cabasilas teaches, is ordered toward "the sanctification of the faithful who through these mysteries receive the remission of their sins and the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom." All else—the antiphons, lessons, prayers, chants—is meant to dispose one for this central sacramental communion. They "turn us towards God" and "make us fit for the reception and preservation of the holy mysteries, which is the aim of the liturgy."[52] He continues:

> But there is another level of liturgical signification . . . another way in which these forms . . . sanctify us. It consists in this: that in them Christ and the deeds he accomplished and the sufferings he endured for our sakes are represented. Indeed, it is the whole scheme of the work of redemption which is signified in the psalms and readings, as in all the actions of the priest throughout the liturgy. . . . The ceremonies which precede the act of sacrifice symbolize the events which occurred before the death of Christ: his coming on earth, his first appearance and his perfect manifestation. Those which follow . . . [symbolize] the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, the conversion of the nations which they brought about, and their divine society. The whole celebration of the mystery is like a unique portrayal of a single body, which is the work of the Saviour.

But this representational aspect of the ritual is not an empty show. The ceremonies are meant to be a concrete object of popular contemplation in order to stimulate a personal response of faith. "Their purpose," Cabasilas continues, "is to set before us the Divine plan, that by looking upon it our souls may be sanctified, and thus we may be made fit to receive these sacred gifts. Just as the work of redemption, when it was first achieved, restored the world, so now, when it is ever before

our eyes, it makes the souls of those who behold it better and more divine." For Cabasilas the operation of this liturgical symbolism does not depend on some abstruse symbol-system. On the contrary, nothing could be more concretely realistic:

> It was necessary, not only that we should think about, but also that to some extent we should *see* the utter poverty of him who possesses all, the coming on earth of him who dwells everywhere, the shame of the most blessed God, the sufferings of the impassible; that we should see how much he was hated and how much he loved; how he, the Most High, humbled himself; what torments he endured, what he accomplished in order to prepare for us this holy table. Thus, in beholding the unutterable freshness of the work of salvation, amazed by the abundance of God's mercy, we are brought to venerate him who had such compassion for us, who saved us at so great a price: to entrust our souls to him, to dedicate our lives to him, to enkindle in our hearts the flame of his love. Thus prepared, we can enter into contact with the fire of the solemn mysteries with confidence and trust.

This is no intellectualist spirituality, no lofty gnosticism of a spiritual elite, but a profoundly imaginative popular piety.

BACK TO THE WEST

Nothing could be further than this fixed, unified, coherent synthesis of image and rite from the contemporary "postmodern" mentality in the West, where cafeteria-style religion prevails and one picks and chooses from this smorgasbord only what suits one's taste. But that is all wrong, I believe. For what we're doing at Christian services is a special kind of remembering. It's what we call "liturgy," which is just a fancy name for what religious communities do when they gather to express in prayer and gesture and song what they are, their identity as a religious group. Liturgy activates the group's heritage, expressing their collective identity. So it's a "public" not a private thing, which is why the Greeks called it *leitourgia*, the Greek word for "public service."

As part of a group's heritage, liturgy is what we call a "ritual," a pattern of signs and gestures members of a community use to interpret and enact for themselves, and express and transmit to others, their relation to reality. It is something that helps communities maintain their cohesion and identity, what they are, their beliefs relating to the basic questions of life. It's a group's way of telling its story, of saying what it is. Now, what any group is includes a past, a present, and a future—the past that made it what it is, the present in which it lives that reality, and the future it hopes to be.

That's why our liturgical prayers are full of past, present, and future, as in the Roman Mass in the ICEL translation:

> Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!
> Dying you destroyed our death! Rising you restored our life!
> Lord Jesus, come in glory!

Past, present, future, over and over again. This depends first of all on remembrance or memorial—called *anamnesis* in the Greek New Testament—a recalling and retelling of those events recounted in the Bible that have been transformed in the collective memory of the community into key symbolic episodes defining the community's being and self-understanding. For Jews it is the exodus and Sinai covenant. For Christians it is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jews celebrate the memorial of this covenant in the Seder with its Passover Haggadah. Orthodox and Catholic Christians celebrate our new covenant in Jesus in the memorial of the Lord's Supper and other sacraments, such as baptism. But it's always this same root metaphor that returns again and again in every celebration: Jesus Christ died and rose for our salvation, and we must die to sin in order to rise to new life in him. That's the basis for what we are and do at liturgy, following Jesus's command: "Do this in memory of me."

To paraphrase Dom Gregory Dix,[53] never in history has a command been better obeyed. Century after century, in every country and among every race, men and women have gathered, publicly or in secret, legally or illegally, to do this same action in obedience to that command. It has been done in every conceivable human circumstance,

from catacomb to cathedral, in peaceful village churches or on the fields and ships of war, and for every conceivable human need. Nothing better has been found to do for kings at their crowning or for a bride and groom at their wedding, for the death of a loved one, or because the Turks were at the gates of Vienna, for an ecumenical council in the splendors of St. Peter's in Rome, or by a secretly consecrated Russian bishop in a prison camp in the frozen Siberian tundra, or for the death of a loved one.

Down through the ages, the command "Do this in memory of me" has been obeyed; faithfully, constantly obeyed—at least until the 1960s, when some Americans of that decade's "me generation" began to decide they knew better, began to say they didn't "get anything out of going to church." Well, "what one gets out of it," as the millions once behind the Iron Curtain in the former Soviet empire have rediscovered now that they are free to do so, is the inestimable privilege of being able to glorify almighty God. For neither life nor liturgy is a pick-and-choose buffet, but the will of God for all, whether you know it or like it or not.

Furthermore, in earlier centuries Christians realized that what you got out of it was what you put into it. Here is what the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* (2.59) say about the ecclesial importance of the participation of the laity in the Church's liturgical prayer life, morning and evening:

> When you teach, bishop, command and exhort the people to frequent the church regularly, morning and evening every day, and not to forsake it at all, but to assemble continually and not diminish the Church by absenting themselves and making the Body of Christ lack a member. For it is not only said for the benefit of the priests, but let each of the laity hear what was said by the Lord as spoken to himself: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Mt 12:30). Do not be neglectful of yourselves, nor rob the Savior of His own members, nor divide His Body, nor scatter His members, nor prefer the needs of this life to the Word of God.[54]

That says it all.

CONCLUSION

It is my conviction that precisely the qualities of Byzantine iconography and liturgy I have described, both of them reflective of the larger Byzantine worldview, helped preserve popular Orthodoxy in *Byzance après Byzance*. Let me conclude by quoting Peter Hammond's charming book on the Greek Church, *The Waters of Marah*, on just this continuity:

> Throughout the long centuries of Turkish domination, the Greek Church held fast the traditions which enshrined the saving truths of the divine economy. The Gospel was preached less by means of homilies and sermons than through the regular cycle of feast and fast . . . the visible catechism of the Church's liturgy. So it was that the faith was preserved as a royal treasure: the life of the mystical body burned on in secret, though the royal priesthood might be "expelled their Churches and those converted into Moschs; the Mysteries of the Altar conceal'd in dark places . . ."[55]
>
> . . . Outwardly . . . [these churches] are scarcely distinguishable from the cottages which surround them . . .
>
> Within, however, one finds oneself in another world. Walls unpierced by windows are covered with paintings which set forth the whole story of creation and redemption. Patriarchs and prophets mingle with the saints of the new dispensation; Elias is caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire and Jonah goes down to the bottoms of the mountains with the weeds wrapped about his head; those whose names are honoured throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, Athanasius, Basil and Gregory the Divine, rub shoulders with local saints like St. George of Iannina and the Neo-Martyrs; the Lord Christ is baptised in Jordan, He changes the water into wine and reigns in triumph from the tree of Calvary; the Holy Spirit descends in tongues of fire upon the apostles.[56]
>
> For the Greek Christian . . . the humblest village church is always *heaven upon earth*; the place where men and women, according to their capacity and desire, are caught up into the adoring worship of the redeemed cosmos; where dogmas are no barren abstractions but hymns of exulting praise, and the saving acts of the divine compassion—the

> cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day and the ascension into the heavenly places—are made present and actual through the operation of the Holy Spirit who "ever was, and is and shall be; having neither beginning nor ending, but for ever joined to and numbered with the Father and the Son . . . through whom the Father is known, and the Son is glorified, and by all acknowledged, one power, one worship and one order of the Holy Trinity.[57]

Worshiping in this atmosphere of profuse symbolism, through which the supernatural splendor of the inaccessible divine majesty and holiness is approached, the worshipers witness the exaltation and sanctification of creation, the majestic appearance of God who enters them, sanctifies them, divinizes them through the transfiguring light of his heavenly grace. It is not just a matter of "receiving the sacraments," but of living habitually within a liturgical ambiance that encompasses one in body and soul, transfigured through faith into a concrete vision of spiritual beauty and joy.

NOTES

1. Anton L. Mayer, *Liturgie in der europäischen Geistesgeschichte Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. and intro. Emmanuel von Severus (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlich Buchgesellschaft, 1971).

2. I am indebted to my friend and colleague Fr. Richard Vosko for his generous help in bringing me up to speed on this and other issues in a field in which he is one of the major Catholic exponents today.

3. Fr. Hovda's obituary from *Worship*, with which he had collaborated for years, can be found at http://liturgicalleaders.blogspot.com/2008/09/robert-hovda.html.

4. Michael E. DeSanctis, "Upon This Foundation: Are New Church Designs Taking Us Backward?" *America*, May 28, 2012, 28–30.

5. A. Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, The Library of Orthodox Theology No. 4 (London: The Faith Press, 1966), chap. 4. On the formation of this "final synthesis," see R.F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), chaps. 6–7, and throughout the book.

6. N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance: Continuation de l'"histoire de la vie byzantine,"* Édition de l'Institut d'Études Byzantines (Bucharest: Institut d'Études Byzantines, 1935; repr. Bucharest, 1971).

7. Cf. D.M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 7–9, 12ff., 18ff., 34–35.

8. See R.F. Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–1981): 45–75, esp. 72–75.

9. See the remarks in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453*, Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), xiv–v, 22–23. On the word itself, see E. Trapp, "Lexikalische Notizen zur Wortfamilie von eijkw`n," in *LIQOSTRWTON: Studien zur byzantinischen Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, ed. B. Borkopp and Th. Steppan (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2000), 287–94.

10. *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, intro., trans., and commentary Cyril Mango, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 3 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 187.

11. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 202–3.

12. C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 65–66.

13. Ibid.

14. St. Asterios of Amaseia (d. ca. 410), "Hom. 11 in laudem S. Euphemiae," in *St. Euphémie de Chalcédoine*, ed. F. Halkin (Brussels: Soc. des Bollandistes, 1965), 4ff. = PG 40:333–37; translated in Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 39. (PG = *Patrologia Graeca*.)

15. See G. Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics* (New York: J. Murray, 1963), 38: "the Byzantine artist held that he was representing a past fact."

16. C. Mango, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia," in *Hagia Sophia*, ed. H. Kähler; trans. Ellyn Childs (New York: Praeger, 1967), 48. Some identify a move toward narrative cycles in church iconographic programs as characteristic of the monastic piety of the Palaiologan period.

17. Slobodan Ćurčić, "Religious Settings of the Late Byzantine Sphere," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 65.

18. The same process is clearly visible in the history of the Byzantine Holy Week services: see R.F. Taft, "In the Bridegroom's Absence: The Paschal Triduum in the Byzantine Church," in *La celebrazione del Triduo pasquale: Anamnesis e mimesis. Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, May 9–13, 1988* (Rome: San Anselmo, 1990), 71–97; reprinted

in R. F. Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), chap. 1; R. F. Taft, "Holy Week in the Byzantine Tradition," in *Hebdomadae Sanctae Celebratio: Conspectus Historicus Comparativus: The Celebration of Holy Week in Ancient Jerusalem and Its Development in the Rites of East and West*, ed. A. G. Kollamparampil, Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, Subsidia 93 (Rome: CLV—Edizioni liturgiche, 1997), 67–91.

19. On the concepts of *historia* and *theōria*, see Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 45–75, esp. 47–57; H. Musurillo, "History and Symbol: A Study of Form in Early Christian Literature, *Theological Studies* 18 (1957): 357–86, esp. 370–73, 378–81. Musurillo calls *historia* "typological history," *theōria* "existential interpretation" (381).

20. A. P. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), 157–58, and cf. 79–84; also C. Mango, *Byzantium and Its Image: History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire and its Heritage*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS191 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), chap. 1, esp. 30–32; Čurčić, "Religious Settings of the Late Byzantine Sphere"; D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 17–22. See also H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975), 129–47.

21. Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power*, 60–61, cf. 126, 134.

22. C. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 218; Mango, *Byzantium and its Image*, chap. 1, esp. 32.

23. *De ordine sepulturae*, PG 155:680BC; translated by A. Rentel, "The 14th Century Patriarchal Liturgical *Diataxis* of Dimitrios Gemistos: Edition and Commentary" (Doct. diss., Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 2004), 75. I directed this dissertation.

24. Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power*, 134.

25. On liturgical *diataxeis* and their multiplication in this period, see Rentel, "The 14th Century Patriarchal Liturgical *Diataxis*," chap. 1; R. F. Taft, "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the 'Byzantine Rite,'" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): 191–94.

26. Rentel, "The 14th Century Patriarchal Liturgical *Diataxis*," 75.

27. P. Hetherington, trans., *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysius of Fourna: An English Translation, with Commentary, of cod. Gr. 7608 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London: Sagittarius, 1974). Studies and editions of the Greek text are indicated at 116–17. This manual is probably a compilation of earlier materials (iii–iv), though how far back such instruc-

tions go is moot. This remains one of the innumerable inadequately studied aspects of Byzantine culture. On the whole question, see H. Torp, *The Integrating System of Proportion in Byzantine Art: An Essay on the Method of the Painters of Holy Images*, Institutum Romanum Norvegiae, Acta ad Archaeologicam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia, series altera in 8º, Vol. IV (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1984), esp. 12–14, 25–47. I owe this reference to my friend John Lindsay Opie, professor of Byzantine Art History at the University of Rome.

28. Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power*, 157–58.

29. See ibid., 79–84.

30. Except, of course, for the Iconoclasts: see ibid., 86–90.

31. V. Lossky, "Tradition and Traditions," in *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Daniel B. Clendinin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 132; and Leonid Ouspensky, *The Meaning of Icons*, trans. G.E.H. Palmer and E. Kadloubovsky (Crestwood: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1982), 14.

32. *First Apology against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, no. 16, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. B. Kotter, Patristische Texte und Studien 7, 12, 17, 22, 29 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969–1988), 3:89 = PG 94:1245A; translation in John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, trans. D. Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 23.

33. F.E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), 378. On this prayer and the phrase in question, see R.F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, vol. 2, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites*, 4th ed., Orientalia Christiana Analecta 200 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2004), chap. 3, esp. 135–41.

34. See, for example, the dictum of Pope St. Leo I, the Great (440–61): *Quod . . . Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit*—"What was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the church's liturgical ministry" (*Sermon 74: On the Ascension II*, chap. 2 [PL 54:398]). (PL = *Patrologia Latina*)

35. *Dialogue against All Heresies* 289–290, PG 155:524D–525A (translation adapted from Nicholas Constas's notes).

36. Ibid., 131, PG 155:340AB.

37. On the communion of saints theme, see Th. Mathews, "The Sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine Church Decoration," *Perkins Journal* 41, no. 3 (1988): 14; for its theology, see R.F. Taft, "The Veneration of the Saints in the Byzantine Liturgical Tradition," in *Qusiva aijnevsew": Mélanges liturgiques offerts à la mémoire de l'Archevêque Georges Wagner*, ed. J. Getcha and A. Lossky (Paris:

Presses S. Serge, 2005), 353–68; R. F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, vol. 5, *The Precommunion Rites*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 261 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000), 234–40.

38. The basic work on the iconography of the sanctuary is S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, College Art Association Monograph on the Fine Arts 56 (Seattle: College Art Association in association with University of Washington Press, 1999), see 6–14 on the evolution from sanctuary chancel to iconostasis; also A. Wharton Epstein, "The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?" *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 134 (1981): 1–28; J. Walter, "The Origin of the Iconostasis," *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1971): 251–67; and the further literature they cite.

39. On the use and symbolism of the doors, see S. Parenti, "Le porte nella liturgia bizantina," in *Pellegrini alla Porta della misericordia*, ed. M. Sodi, Quaderni di Rivista Liturgica 2 (Padua: Abbazia di Santa Giustina, 2000), 111–20, with further references there.

40. Not "Royal" or "Beautiful Doors," as they are often mistakenly called today. The "Royal"—i.e., "Imperial"—"Doors" were the central doors leading from the narthex into the nave of Hagia Sophia, so called because only the patriarch and imperial party entered through them.

41. See Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 21–25; H.-J. Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York: Pueblo, 1986), 103–11; Ch. Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, Birmingham Byzantine Series 1 (London: Variorum Publications, 1982), 232–38.

42. See the rubrics ordering the celebrant to bow in the Byzantine Basil and Chrysostom anaphoras in the earliest extant euchology manuscript, the eighth-century *Barberini Gr. 336*: S. Parenti and E. Velkovska, eds., *L'Eucologio Barberini gr. 336 (ff. 1–263)*, 2nd ed., Bibliotheca *Ehemerides Liturgicae*, Subsidia 80 (Rome: CLV—Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000), §§15.1, 33.1, 34.1, 35.1, 3, 6; also in the Greek Liturgy of St. James: B.-Ch. Mercier, ed., *La Liturgie de S. Jacques: Édition critique, avec traduction latine*, Patrologia Orientalis 26.2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1946), 198, 200–206, 214, 220, and apparatus; the Syriac Liturgy of St. James in *Anaphorae Syriacae, quotquot in codicibus adhuc repertae sunt, cura Pontificii Instituti Studiorum Orientalium editae et Latinae versae*, vols. 1–3, ed. O. Heiming (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1939–), 2:142ff.; cf. 2:194ff., 218ff.; and, indeed, the rubrics to bow in the Syriac anaphoras throughout. See also the illustrations of Byzantine liturgical celebrants praying bowed in Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 145–200; Walter, *Art and Ritual*, plate XXVIII, no. 60.

43. Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy*, 103–11.

44. In the words of scholar-patriarch (858–67, 877–86) Photius, *Homily 17*, chap. 6, on the *Theotokos* mosaic of 867 still in the apse of Hagia Sophia: Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 190.

45. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries*, 144, plate I; 147, plate V; 148, fig. 1; 150–51, figs. 4–5; 156, fig. 13; 161, fig. 20; 16, fig. 25; 176–77, figs. 41–42; 181, fig. 46; 183, fig. 49; 189, fig. 56; 198, fig. 68.

46. Ibid., 68–77, 91, 102–3, 106–9.

47. Ibid., 22–23, 37–40, 45–47, 85, 87, 89; 152, fig. 8; 157, fig. 15.

48. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 382.

49. As Mathews, "The Sequel to Nicaea II," 14–15, notes, although art historians commonly refer to this series of panels as a festal cycle, that is inaccurate, since the series follows the chronology of Jesus's life in the Gospels, beginning with the Annunciation, and not the festive cycle of the church year that begins September 1.

50. PG 155:337–40.

51. *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*: Nicolas Cabasilas, *Explication de la Divine Liturgie*, trans. and notes S. Salaville, 2nd ed., Sources chrétiennes 4bis (Paris: Cerf, 1967) = PG 150:367–492; English translation is Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. J. M. Hussey and P. A. McNulty (London: SPCK, 1960). *The Life in Christ*: Nicolas Cabasilas, *La vie en Christ*, 2 vols., ed. M.-H. Congourdeau, Sources chrétiennes 355, 361 (Paris: Cerf, 1889–1900) = PG 150:493–726; English translation is *The Life in Christ*, trans. Carmino J. de Catanzaro (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974). On Cabasilas, see G. Podskalsky, "Nikolaos Kabasilas: Meister und Lehre des Gebetes," based on an unfinished and unpublished ms. of Hugo Rahner, S.J. (1900–1968), *Ostkirchliche Studien* 20 (1971): 17–42; and most recently Y. Spiteris, *Cabasilas: Teologo e mistico bizantino: Nicola Cabasilas Chamaetos e la sua sintesi teologica*, Pubblicazioni del Centro Aletti 15 (Rome: Lipa, 1996). On Cabasilas's commentary on the Divine Liturgy, see R. Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien 9 (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1966), 215–44; Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy*, 124–32, 190–96.

52. *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* 1.1. This and the following passages of Cabasilas are cited from the Hussey and McNulty translation, *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, 26–29.

53. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre, 1945), 743–46.

54. *Les Constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 1, ed. Marcel Metzger, Sources chrétiennes 320 (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 324.

55. Hammond is citing Paul Rycaut (1628–1700), who was the British consul at Smyrna during 1667–78, when he researched his *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (1679).

56. P. Hammond, *The Waters of Marah: The Present State of the Greek Church* (London: Rockliff, 1956), 21–22.

57. Ibid., 16.

CHAPTER TWO

Out of the White Box and Back to Imagery

Post–Vatican II Iconoclasm and Beyond

THOMAS M. LUCAS, S.J.

A vivid memory from my childhood still haunts me. In 1961, when I was nine years old, my mother took me for a last visit to the parish church I had attended throughout my childhood. Constructed in 1865, St. Patrick Church in Placerville, California, was a small brick neo-Gothic edifice. The late nineteenth-century German stained glass and the interior furnishings and floor had been entirely removed. Only the apse painting of a monstrance surrounded by clouds and angels remained. My mom, who had served as an army nurse in World War II, said it looked like bombed-out churches she had seen in Germany. The parish church was being demolished to make way for a new and much larger church on the same site: a flat and frankly uninspired A-frame construction, which my grandmother referred to until the day she died as "that damned ski-hut." The experience was my first lesson in architectural and liturgical design and the deep-felt emotions that they evoke.

St. Patrick's was being rebuilt on the uncertain cusp between two worlds: the traditional Catholicism of the Irish diocesan clergy who

ministered in California for the first century of the Diocese of Sacramento's history, and the shifting artistic and liturgical planes of a Church on the very brink of the Second Vatican Council. The council's first document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was published only a few months after the new parish church was dedicated. Its reforms permitted the marble altar to be brought forward from the back wall, but it did nothing to improve the quality of the contemporary cast-resin statues of Mary and the Joseph that had replaced the prior church's traditional painted plaster Immaculate Conception and Sacred Heart, which had been ordered decades before from the McCoy Company's religious goods catalogue (see fig. 2.1).

The history of the use of images in the Roman Catholic tradition is complicated. It has seen three great tidal ebbs and flows: the Iconoclastic crises of the eighth and ninth centuries that rocked both East and West; the "bare ruined choirs" of the Reformation period; and the fervent if short-lived embrace of unornamented modernist architecture that coincided almost exactly with the Second Vatican Council.

An in-depth analysis of the Byzantine Iconoclastic crises of the eighth and ninth centuries is far beyond the scope of this brief study. The final word has yet to be written on its causes and effects, due in part to the destruction of almost all of the documents of the Iconoclast writers after the eventual iconodule "Triumph of Orthodoxy" under Empress Theodora in 843. Briefly stated, politics and theology were inextricably mixed throughout the crises. Iconoclast emperors were fast losing ground to rigorously aniconic Islam, and the wonder-working and apotropaic power of sacred images came into question. Iconoclastic theologians warned of divine wrath because of superstitious and idolatrous use of images, and they proposed a purified—read "puritanical"—doctrine that protected the simple faithful from confusion. An interesting question that remains to be fully explored is the extent to which both imperial and ecclesiastical authorities sought to increase their power and control both over monasteries and the uneducated faithful through their management of popular devotion.

On the iconodule side, theologian St. John Damascene created a last, and lasting, Neoplatonic hierarchy or "Great Chain of Images" that are worthy of adoration and reverence. It ranged from the Trinity

Figure 2.1 Altar of the Immaculate Conception. Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Santa Barbara, California. This side altar, ca. 1930, is a typical early twentieth-century shrine to the Immaculate Conception. Photo: Thomas Lucas, S.J.

through Christ the Word made flesh to the *Theotokos* and the saints to "material remembrances of past events, be they the words of scripture, icons, or objects. . . . In all these categories of images, the divine power was in some measure revealed, and if the Holy Spirit dwelt within the saints, so also he stayed close to their images and tombs."[1] This interpretation, together with the nuanced distinction between the worship of God and veneration of the saints, was incorporated as authentic teaching at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, Nicaea II (787),[2] and served as the basis of the Council of Trent's response to the iconoclasm of the Protestant reformers 750 years later.

The Western Church's use of images was bolstered by the influx of refugee monks from the iconoclastic East in the eighth and ninth centuries, but it was deeply rooted in St. Augustine's serial, typological reading of the Old Testament and St. Gregory the Great's sturdy if less sophisticated realism. Gregory (ca. 600) insisted that images served the valid catechetical needs of the unlettered: sacred images were the *biblia pauperum* ("the bible of the poor"): "What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the ignorant who look at it; in a picture even the unlettered may see exactly what example they should follow; in a picture they who know no letters may yet read. Hence, for barbarians especially, a picture takes the place of a book."[3]

The West's embrace of three-dimensional imagery in the form of statuary and reliquaries and the cult of relics in general was, of course, a direct challenge to the first commandment's injunction against the making of images. Truth to tell, exaggerations in medieval practice and private devotion that often verged into superstition and magical thinking gave the sixteenth-century Protestant reformers much grist for the mill. The foundational "five solas" of the Reformation—*sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *solo Christo*, *soli Deo gloria* ("by scripture alone," "by faith alone," "by grace alone," "by Christ alone," "glory to God alone")—stood in stark contrast to traditional Church teachings on the efficacy of tradition, works, and the intercession and veneration of the saints. Many reformers, especially Calvinists and various offshoot Puritan sects, decried the very making of images as blasphemous, given the utter and unimaginable transcendence of God. Such an interpretation was at odds with the perennial Catholic teaching that the incarnation of Christ,

the very visibility of the Word made flesh, served as a warrant for the making of images. Martin Luther and some of his followers espoused a more moderate and defensible reformist stance. They pointed to the danger of idolatry inherent in the veneration of sacred images: the all-too-easy confusion between and transfer of the adoration of God to material objects. Luther, indeed, defended the use of images and narrative art for private devotion. In England, the relatively moderate views of the "Defender of the Faith," Henry VIII, gave way to more rigorous reforms enacted by Thomas Cranmer during the reign of Edward VI and the upsurge in Puritanism under Elizabeth I and James I.[4]

Mention of King James, whose authorized English translation of the scriptures became one of the landmarks of English prose, points the reader back to one of the tectonic shifts that occurred just as the Reformation began: the dramatic increase in literacy occasioned by the Gutenberg revolution. Moveable-type technology made books affordable and accessible for the first time in human history. It can be reasonably argued that, without the printing press and the new literacy it fostered, *sola scriptura*, the Protestant insistence on the primacy of the scriptural word, might never have taken firm root, as it did in the sixteenth century.

Another tectonic shift had already occurred during the fifteenth-century Renaissance. Albrecht Dürer, an early disciple of Luther, acknowledged that the arts of Graeco-Roman antiquity "were again brought to life by the Italians." Up to the Renaissance, Western painting and sculpture's principal function had been to serve the devotional needs of the Church (and, in some cases, regimes and rulers that supported it). With the reintroduction of pagan and secular images and humanism's recovery of the narratives of pagan antiquity, content became secondary to the artist's own invention and technique. The icon ceased to be a vessel that mystically contained transcendent holiness, and the picture became a window through which the viewer could experience the artist's perception of reality. *Aestheticism* relegated *asceticism* to a lesser or even meaningless category: "The image formerly had been assigned a special reality and taken literally as a visible manifestation of the sacred person. Now the image was in the first place made subject to the general laws of nature, including optics, and was assigned

wholly to the realm of sense perception."[5] In the epochs that followed, the art of religion slowly but surely morphed into the religion of art.[6]

The Catholic response to the challenges of the reformers was theologically traditional but artistically robust. The exhausted fathers of the Council of Trent took up the question of sacred images in their very last session (1563), and their decrees, which echoed the orthodox teaching of Nicaea II, broke no new ground, but they did anathematize "abuses, false doctrine, all superstition, all aiming at base profit [i.e., the sale of relics], and seductive charm . . . nothing profane and nothing unseemly [is permitted], since holiness befits the house of God."[7]

At the forefront of the artistic reentrenchment that flowered in the Catholic Baroque were the fathers, brothers, and patrons of the Society of Jesus, founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius Loyola. His *Spiritual Exercises* encouraged and even demanded rich sensory engagement. The person making the exercises was instructed "to apply the senses" in order imaginatively to see, hear, taste, and experience the life, death, and resurrection of Christ in a series of guided meditations, and to "observe, consider, contemplate . . . and reflect and draw some spiritual profit" from the experiences.[8] This interior methodology was reflected and operationalized in Jesuit churches across the globe. Combining sacred art, polyphonic music, learned preaching, and dazzling paraliturgical functions, like Forty Hours' Devotions, the Jesuits created theatrical extravaganzas designed to teach, inspire, and move the participants. Indeed, some Protestants across Europe were opposed to sacred imagery and whitewashed church interiors, but the Catholic response fed by this Jesuit inspiration frankly celebrated the senses' power to move, teach, and delight. It resulted in what Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger called "a unique kind of *fortissimo* of joy, an Alleluia in visual form."[9]

The neoclassicism of the Enlightenment and its democratic secularism curbed the *élan vital* and brio of the Baroque. Although Catholicism briefly tried on neoclassicism as a style, it was a poor fit. Its precise proportionality and cool intellectualism were at odds with the inherently theatricality, even "messiness," of Catholic worship. Moreover, the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century and the century of intermittent conflicts and revolts against authority that followed it drove the Church into a decidedly defensive posture. More often than

not siding the with the *ancien régime*, Catholicism stepped out of cultural and social engagement into the safety of a nostalgically remembered past. In practical design and cultic terms, this retreat led the Church to a retrograde embrace of former styles of architecture in which the Tridentine liturgy could find a comfortable and safe home. It marked, according to Cardinal Ratzinger, "a flight into historicism, the copying of the past or else attempted compromise, [the Church] losing itself in resignation and cultural abstinence."[10]

For most of the Catholic communion outside a few progressive monasteries, the almost two-hundred-year period between the French Revolution (1789) and the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) might be characterized as an epoch of revivalism: neo-Romanesque, neo-Gothic, neo-Classical, and neo-Baroque art and architecture were the prescription, frequently augmented by bracing doses of overt Romanticism. This tendency was particularly evident in the immigrant church of the United States. As misunderstood and sometimes persecuted minority populations, the flood of European immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often experienced cultural dislocation, insecurity, and the outright hostility from the dominant Anglo-Protestant culture they encountered here. Nourished by the memories of what they had left behind, building in the historical or "neo-" idioms renewed the immigrant parishes' sense of cultural grounding or rootedness. Large houses of worship built with noble materials underscored the immigrant communities' sense of history, while providing prestige, respectability, and a feeling of cultural "arrival." Patron saints and special feast days were celebrated with ethnic food and festivals, but the single Latin liturgy brought a degree of uniformity amid a rich and sometimes bewildering array of artistic and cultural voices.[11]

In terms of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century iconography, two images dominated Catholic tradition in the United States: the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Medieval devotion to the wounds of Christ evolved during the Baroque period, largely because of the famous visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–90) (fig. 2.2) and the active promotion of the Jesuits, who saw in the devotion a healthy corrective to the sterile

Figure 2.2 *Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Contemplating the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, by Corrado Giaquinto (1703–65). Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

rigorism and pessimism of the Jansenists.[12] Pope Pius IX's promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854) grew out of ancient traditions of both the Eastern and Western Churches, and it led to a profusion of images of the Virgin Mary.[13] Although Baroque artists Rubens, Velazquez, and Murillo had already established the iconography of the *Immaculata*, statues and paintings of the Blessed Virgin's appearances as Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal at Paris (1830) and the appearances at Lourdes (1858) and at Fatima (1917) became, for all practical purposes, the period's canonical images of the Virgin Mary. The Miraculous Medal devotion promoted by St. Catherine Labouré (1806–76) even combined images of the *Immaculata* and the Sacred Heart.[14]

The iconoclasm of the Second Vatican Council had its roots in the various liturgical movements in Northern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dom Prosper Guéranger's (1805–75) neo-Gothic revival of the Gregorian chant tradition and the medieval liturgy at Solesmes was a first, albeit incomplete step back toward a recovery of pre-Tridentine sources. The work of Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873–1960) brought deeper study of the patristic era and Orthodox traditions into the forefront of scholarship, and it led to eventual reforms of the Liturgy of the Hours, the rituals of Holy Week, and a strong emphasis on use of the vernacular in the liturgy. The Rhineland Benedictine monastery of Maria Laach instituted various liturgical innovations in the 1920s, including the dialogue Mass (*missa recitata*), with the celebrant facing the congregation.[15]

Artists and architects working with monastic communities and their offshoots began, as early as the immediate post–World War I decade, to experiment with simplified structures and ornament. Fueled by the Bauhaus experiment, the "international style" of modern architecture was firmly on the ascendant, and its practitioners preached the inviolable gospel of form following function and white-walled simplicity.[16] At the same time, abstract art grew in prestige if not popularity, and the value of representational art was called into question.[17]

Against this horizon of recovery of sources, liturgical innovation, and artistic and architectural modernity, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*) was published in December 1963. It was the first major theological and

practical overhaul of the Roman Rite since the Council of Trent exactly 400 years before. The document's insistence on "full, active, and conscious participation" in the liturgy and its encouragement of the use of the vernacular are seen as the hallmarks of the Vatican II reforms, but the council fathers addressed the question of art and architecture in the *SC*'s seventh and final chapter. For the reader's convenience, the full text of chapter 7 is given in appendix B.[18]

Although as recently as 1912 the archbishop of Cologne had forbidden the construction of any churches that were not in the neo-Romanesque or neo-Gothic styles,[19] the council made a daring assertion: "The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own; she has admitted styles from every period according to the natural talents and circumstances of peoples, and the needs of the various rites." It affirmed that "the art of our own day, coming from every race and region, shall be given free scope in the Church."[20] History, of course, was not to be discounted. The Vatican II fathers reminded their readers that "Holy Mother Church has always been the friend of the fine arts and has ever sought their noble help . . . and for this purpose she has trained artists. In fact, the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the right to pass judgment upon the arts" in order to determine what is fitting for sacred purposes.[21] Symbolic of this attitude was Pope Paul VI's enthusiastic establishment of the Vatican Collection of Contemporary Religious Art (1973) in the Borgia Apartments of the Apostolic Palace.[22]

On the topics of religious art, architecture, and the use of imagery, Vatican II expressed a kind of cautious minimalism. *SC* encouraged "noble simplicity rather than mere sumptuous display," and it forbade the use of images that are "repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity and pretense." Importantly, "the practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy."[23] The use of images, then, was reaffirmed, but excesses of devotion that might trigger

the ancient challenges posed by the iconoclasts and Protestant reformers were to be avoided at all costs.

THE NEW ICONOCLASM

So why, then, did Cardinal Ratzinger decry "a new iconoclasm, which has frequently been regarded as virtually mandated by the Second Vatican Council?" With his characteristic long historical view, the cardinal reflected that "the destruction of images, the first signs of which reach back to the 1920s, eliminated a lot of *kitsch* and unworthy art, but ultimately it left behind a void, the wretchedness of which we are now experiencing in a truly acute way."[24]

That there was a great deal of "unworthy" and kitschy art in the pre–Vatican II Church is undeniable. To a large measure, post-Enlightenment Catholicism had chosen the safe road of tradition rather than the more perilous (and perhaps more adventurous and productive?) path of cultural and artistic engagement that had characterized much of the Western Church's earlier history. In a word, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced very little great Catholic art and architecture. In the stuffy atmosphere of an ultramontane and largely reactionary Church, many traditional symbols got stalled, or, to use Merleau-Ponty's and Ricoeur's evocative term, "sedimented." A brief flash of hard iconoclastic rain may well have been needed to clear out that accumulation.

Moreover, although the conceptual and exploratory research for Vatican II had long been quietly in the works, the council's timing coincided with the "perfect storm" of artistic and architectural modernism and a general cultural reappraisal and loosening of traditional norms and mores in the post–World War II decades. In the United States, Catholicism finally came into its own with the 1960 election of John F. Kennedy, and an immigrant Church became a mainstream institution. Abstract Expressionism had replaced the representational as the dominant art form, and the featureless glass box parodied in Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* ("the lightness & leanness & cleanness & bareness & sparseness of it all") was the unchallenged standard for contemporary design.[25]

The immediate postconciliar decades were times of heady, if not always carefully conceived, experimentation. In many quarters, an "out with the old, in with the new" attitude predominated. Pope John XXIII had suggested the need for *aggiornamento* ("updating") and opening the windows. In retrospect, it seems than no one expected the gale-force winds that swept through the Church. Much that was kitschy, outdated, or stale blew off the incense- and beeswax-incrusted walls of Catholic churches around the world, but with it many worthy pieces and devotional treasures that sustained the faithful were carelessly discarded or lost.

The council's call for noble simplicity, modesty, and integrity was, in fact, close enough to the canons of modernism that they were often uncritically accepted and imposed.[26] The council emphasized full, active, and conscious participation in a vernacular liturgy that privileged intelligibility over mystery. The perceived flattening of hierarchical lines—the community understood as "the people of God" rather than a "perfect society" constructed in vertical tiers[27]—changed the shape and configuration of worship spaces. The notion of "church" as the *domus ecclesiae* ("the house of the worshipping assembly") trumped the former understanding of the church building as *domus dei* ("house of God"), the divine temple wherein God is silently worshipped. *SC*'s almost exclusive focus on the Eucharist displaced much of the devotional apparatus of traditional Catholicism, and images were sometimes disdained as old-fashioned, sentimental, or inappropriate amid "the lightness & leanness & cleanness & bareness & sparseness of it all."

Without entering into the fierce and increasingly strident polemics that have arisen in the last two decades between liturgical progressives and traditionalists, with the latter espousing returns (in varying degrees) to preconciliar liturgical art and architectural forms, I beg the reader's indulgence as I move from third-person historical commentary to first-person reflection on my own experiences as priest, historian, and liturgical artist/designer.[28] In each of these roles, I have experienced firsthand the painful dislocation that inevitably comes when a person's or a community's experience of sacred art and architecture is altered.

For generations, Catholics worshipped in unchanging rituals and places that, in their perceptions, "looked and felt like churches." Tra-

ditional images abounded, extraliturgical devotional practices were encouraged, God was in the tabernacle, and all was right with the world. To paraphrase Matisse's famous maxim that art is like a good armchair that provides relaxation from physical fatigue, for many, preconciliar religious art and architecture provided a sensuously engaging and pleasing experience: a comfortable pew under a stained glass window of one's favorite saint, in a dimly lit chapel redolent with beeswax, incense, and furniture polish, echoing with sweet organ music. A far cry from the all-too-frequently encountered, contemporary unadorned white box furnished with a plywood table and lectern, an underscaled crucifix, and, if one is lucky, a random image of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In fairness as to what has been said before, I need to affirm that the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have yet to produce any more great religious art than the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did. Having ministered for many years in a ghastly 1980s plywood church whose floorplan looked like a stealth bomber, I affirm that the presence of an engaged worshipping community can activate and actualize almost any space and transform it into a living church. A mediocre building, whether ultratraditional or metamodern, can be, so to speak, "transubstantiated" by the Spirit at work in the faithful and their ministers, just as surely as the same Spirit transforms the accidental signs of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

It is certainly an overstatement to call modernism a "god that failed," but it is increasingly evident that, at least in its most rigid forms, it is not entirely suited to the needs of the worshipping Catholic community. Historian and liturgical design consultant Michael DeSanctis summarizes this argument: "The problem with modernism as a liturgical style, at least at its most cerebral and aloof, is that it makes few concessions to . . . popular sentiments; neither does it accommodate very well the inherent messiness that Catholic sacramentality involves, its indulgence in layered sensuality and a range of human emotions not easily confinable to the tidy conceptual schemes of architects and liturgists."[29] The tongue-in-cheek eclecticism of Venturi's postmodernist school, although it does restore ornament to the discourse, rarely succeeds in capturing the textured richness of the tradition. Too often,

postmodernist churches fail to achieve a creative balance between old and new, between ancient forms and contemporary imagery, materials, and building techniques. It is just as easy to err on the side of nostalgic historicism as it is to create a modernist, whitewashed cell.

Still, some experiments in what might be dubbed "postmodernist modernism" point to how the integration of modern architecture and images can create moving and truly Catholic buildings that are resolutely contemporary. Rafael Muneo's Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (2002) that bestrides one of Los Angeles' busiest freeways is massive, modern, yet startlingly intimate. Its massive carved doors are crowned with Robert Graham's *Lady of the Angels*, and its long nave's walls are peopled with John Nava's brilliant processional tapestries that bring unexpected warmth and personality to the otherwise stark edifice.[30] Seattle University's Chapel of St. Ignatius (1997), designed by Steven Holl, is conceived of as "seven bottles of light in a stone box"; its abstract forms are alive with colored light that come from invisible or unexpected sources, and its integrated art program includes five representational icons by Dora Niklova Bittau, Stephen Heilmer's abstract *Gratia Plena* (fig. 2.3), and Holl and Linda Beaumont's serene Blessed Sacrament Chapel (figs. 2.4 and 2.5). Both buildings—one immense, the other intimate—accommodate the "inherent messiness" of Catholic sacramentality and provide the "layered sensuality and range of human emotions" that characterize the Catholic experience.[31]

What these successes point to is the possibility of creating a new syntax that incorporates ancient vocabulary and modern usage. The process requires a thoughtful and, one might say, "heartful" dialectic between tradition and contemporary sensibilities. That dialectic takes time and in many ways is a two-way educational project. Church folk need to educate artists and architects about their tradition, their ritual and devotional needs, their tastes and preferences. Artists and architects need to exercise both their craft and patience, listening to the lived experiences of the end users in order to incorporate what they learn into their eventual sacred images and sacred structures that may differ from their preconceptions. When carried out with attention, openness, and what can only be described as a certain level of humility on both sides, this dialectic can produce wonderful results.

Figure 2.3 *Gratia Plena*, by Steven Heilmer, 1999. Chapel of St. Ignatius, Seattle University. Heilmer's abstracted form of milk pouring down a column subtly delineates the traditional outline of veiled images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It suggests the ancient devotion to the nursing Mother of God, the Madonna del Latte. Photo: Thomas Lucas, S.J.

Figure 2.4 Entryway, Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Chapel of St. Ignatius, Seattle University. Architect: Steven Holl. Photo: Joe Mabel.

Figure 2.5 Interior, Blessed Sacrament Chapel of the Chapel of St. Ignatius, Seattle University. Architect: Steven Holl. Photo: Joe Mabel.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that the development of a contemporary, inculturated iconography and sacred architecture is not cheap. Commissioned artwork costs money, more than what most parishes are accustomed to paying for mediocre objects that are easily ordered from the religious goods catalogue that arrives annually on the pastor's desk and offers convenient terms for ordering and payment.

In the North American Catholic experience, the continuing fact that ours is a Church of immigrants has ramifications we have only just begun to appreciate. The dynamism and devotion of new members of our communities may confound liturgists and designers when a stretch of pure white wall is unexpectedly punctuated by an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe or of the Santo Niño de Atocha, but those powerful images, and, one hopes, new images that will emerge from the living faith of the twenty-first century, speak to us of God's mercy—they accompany us, and give us hope. It is messy, yes, but a sign of life.

As Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out, neither resignation nor cultural abstinence are acceptable options. Image and icon, *domus dei* and *domus ecclesiae*, are part of the Catholic vocabulary, and they will not go away. Catholic worship, finally, is about the human individual's and the community's encounter with the Living God incarnate in Christ, both immanent and transcendent, beauty ever ancient, ever new. It should hardly surprise us that the images that relate to and buildings that shelter those encounters continue to evolve.

NOTES

1. D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 17.

2. See appendix A for the Seventh Ecumenical Council's teaching on icons. For surveys of the history of iconoclasm, see Kristine Kolrud and Marina Prusac, eds., *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), and Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012).

3. Epistle IX, chap. 105 (*Patrologia Latina* 77: col 1027).

4. For brief summaries of these complex issues, see R. Kevin Seasoltz, *A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 162–68, and Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History*

of the Image before the Era of Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 458–70. A very useful collection of original Reformation-era documents is found in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, appendices 39–41, 545–51.

5. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 471. Durer's observation from his 1525 *Painter's Manual* is cited in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, appendix 42C, 553.

6. In a provocative 2007 post in *The Guardian*, British blogger Francesca Gavin captures the modern form of this zeitgeist: "In this highly secular society, spiritual expression and religious ritual are waning. I, like many, am too absorbed in the freedoms and excesses of urban life to slow down and meditate. So where do those sacred urges go? If you don't do 'days of rest' what do you do? It seems to me that art has replaced religion. So if you fancy something sublime, emotive or life changing and God won't do, I recommend art: it works for me. I want something in life that inspires me on a grand, overwhelming scale, and visiting a major gallery is like stepping into a 21st century cathedral. Tate Modern's awesome cavernous space echoes religious architecture. The former power station's towers resemble steeples pointing heavenward, albeit through the titanium-tinted spectacles of high modernism. The classical pillars of the National Gallery aren't very different to St Paul's cathedral. Even the simple, small White Cube galleries in east London are like Friends Meeting Houses or puritan chapels"; see Gavin, "How Art Replaced Religion," *The Guardian*, May 30, 2007, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/artblog/2007/may/30/howartreplacedreligion.

7. "Council of Trent on the Veneration of Saints and Honoring Images" (1563), in *Decrees of the Councils*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 774–76.

8. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary by George Ganss, S.J.* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 59.

9. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger [Pope Benedict XVI], *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 130.

10. Ibid., 130.

11. Seasoltz, *Sense of the Sacred*, 204–6. In a very interesting chapter of Richard Kiechkefer, *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 195–211, the author carefully analyzes the development of church architecture in nineteenth-century Chicago in the complex world of overlapping territorial and ethnic parishes. He concludes: "German parishes had a preference for Gothic style; Polish ones tended toward Polish Renaissance idiom, Italians opted for Romanesque or Renaissance, and while the Irish were most eclectic in their taste, they used Gothic more than any other style. The Romanesque was the

lowest common denominator, a modest and utilitarian idiom often preferred by less affluent parishes; it accounted altogether for 28 percent of the Roman Catholic churches in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chicago, while 34 percent were Gothic and 24 percent Renaissance" (207–8).

12. Michael O'Carroll, *Verbum Caro: An Encyclopedia on Jesus, the Christ* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 158–61.

13. Paul F. Palmer, *Mary in the Documents of the Church* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1952), 68–89.

14. For recent scholarship on the devotion, see Alma Power-Waters, *St. Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000).

15. Keith Pecklers, *Liturgy: The Illustrated History* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2012), 152, 156–59.

16. Ibid., 152–58, and Seasoltz, *Sense of the Sacred*, 221–39. The most extreme form of modernist architectural dogmatism was expressed by an anonymous commentator in the journal *Progressive Architecture* (47, no. 3 [1996]: 138–39), who called into question "the often-stated dogma of religious design that architecture should be shaped by worship, not worship by the architect. . . . The unique conditions of our time, which combine a questioning theology and an experimenting architecture, accentuate the impossibility of church architecture as a preordained unity of religious dogma and architectural style. The modern architect is forced by a fragmented society to evolve a philosophy and explain the formal implications of his work, leading to the architect's personal evaluation of theology and ritual."

17. For a very readable exposition of the move from representation to abstraction, see Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996), chap. 6, "The View from the Edge," 267–323.

18. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*) (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*) is found in *The Documents of Vatican II*, gen. ed. William M. Abbott (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 137–82. Chapter 7, "Sacred Art and Sacred Furnishings," is composed of eight short sections numbered 122 to 130 (pages 174–77). The same text with minor translation variations is found at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. See appendix B for the relevant text from this chapter.

19. Seasoltz, *Sense of the Sacred*, 244.

20. *SC*, sec. 123 (see appendix B).

21. Ibid., sec. 122 (see appendix B).

22. Paul VI, a man of refined taste who deeply appreciated the arts, chose artists not because of their faith but the quality of their work. The core collection includes works by Matisse, Leger, Chagall, Bonnard, Braque,

Rouault, Rothko, and even Francis Bacon. This author's recent visit to the galleries, which most tourists bypass on their way to the Sistine Chapel, was a rather melancholy event. The collection has not been well maintained, and very few recent pieces were on display. See Seasoltz, *Sense of the Sacred*, 254–55.

23. *SC*, secs. 124 and 125 (see appendix B).

24. Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 130. See Edward Robinson, *Language of Mystery* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 45: "Kitsch degrades by satisfying the heart or mind with an inadequate or false image of reality. It is this, and not its failure to appeal to the finer feelings of a cultivated mind, that makes it an enemy of true spirituality."

25. Thomas Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (London: Picador Reprints, 2009), 1–3. The full text of Wolfe's inspired rant is relevant here: "Every $900,000 summer house in the north woods of Michigan or on the shore of Long Island has so many pipe railings, ramps, hob-tread metal spiral stairways, sheets of industrial plate glass, banks of tungsten-halogen lamps, and white cylindrical shapes, it looks like an insecticide refinery. I once saw the owners of such a place driven to the edge of sensory depravation by the whiteness & lightness & leanness & cleanness & bareness & sparseness of it all. They became desperate for an antidote, such as coziness and color. They tried to bury the obligatory white sofas under Thai-silk throws of every rebellious iridescent shade of magenta, pink, and tropical green imaginable. But the architect returned, as he always does, like the conscience of a Calvinist, and he lectured them and hectored them and chucked the shimmering little sweet things out."

26. Cardinal Ratzinger was not sanguine in his appraisal of modern art: "Where do we go from here? Today we are experiencing a crisis, not just a crisis in sacred art, but a crisis of art in general, of unprecedented proportions. The crisis of art for its part is a symptom of the crisis of man's very existence. The immense growth in man's mastery of the material world has left him blind to the questions of life's meaning that transcend the material world. We might also call it a blindness of spirit. . . . Our world of images no longer surpasses the bounds of sense and appearance, and the flood of images that surrounds us really means the end of the image. If something cannot be photographed, it cannot be seen. In this situation, the art of the icon, sacred art, depending as it does on another kind of seeing, becomes impossible. What is more, art itself, which in impressionism and expressionism explored the extreme possibilities of the sense of sight, becomes literally object-less. Art turns into experimenting with self-created worlds, empty 'creativity,' which no longer perceives the *Creator Spiritus*, the Creator Spirit. It attempts to take

his place and yet, in doing so, it manages to produce only what is arbitrary and vacuous, bringing home to man his role as creator" (Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 130–31).

27. See *Lumen Gentium*, chap. 2, secs. 9–17, in *Documents of Vatican II*, 24–37.

28. For a balanced reporting on these polemics and introductions to the principal themes and players, see Mark Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence: Architecture for Worship and Ministry Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), chap. 9, "Where Are We Now? Discernment and Lessons Learned," 181–206, and Michael DeSanctis, *Building from Belief: Advance, Retreat, and Compromise in the Remaking of Catholic Church Architecture* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), "Introduction: Where We Stand," 1–19.

29. DeSanctis, *Building from Belief*, 100–101.

30. Pecklers, *Liturgy*, 192–93.

31. An illustrated pamphlet, *The Chapel of St. Ignatius: A Gathering of Different Lights* (Seattle: Seattle University Campus Ministry, 2000), is available at http://www.seattleu.edu/chapel.

CHAPTER THREE

Vital Inbreathing

Iconicity beyond Representation in Late Antiquity

BISSERA V. PENTCHEVA

This chapter explores the meaning of *eikōn* before Iconoclasm as performance and, more specifically, as an inspiriting with divine *pneuma* manifested in Holy Scripture, patristic writing, the vita of St. Symeon the Stylite the Younger, and in the ecclesiastical rites. In carefully unpacking the textual tradition that supports this conceptualization of the image beyond representation, my study here offers a corrective to our modern restricted understanding of "icon" that is tied only to the product of the painter and sculptor. Recognizing the wider sphere in which *eikōn* manifested itself in Christian culture before Iconoclasm could help us see the centrality of the communal participation in producing sacred space. This chapter forms an excerpt from a much larger study on iconicity, hierotopy, and music in Hagia Sophia.[1]

EIKŌN IN THE SCRIPTURES AND PATRISTIC WRITINGS

The origins of the conceptualization of "icon" as inspirited matter can be found in Genesis 1:26–28 and 2:7, relating Adam's creation as an *eikōn tou theou*. In Genesis 1:26–28 we read: "Let us make man accord-

ing to our image and likeness [. . .] And God made man, according to the image of God, male and female he made them, and God blessed them."[2] In the Greek, this passage distinguishes between "image" (*eikōn*) and "likeness" (*homoiōsis*). This shape is simultaneously invested with divine will through the act of blessing, *eulogeō*. In the second account, Genesis 2:7, we read: "And God formed the man of dust of the earth and breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living soul."[3] Through imparting his Spirit of life, God vivified Adam. Genesis 1:26–28 speaks of *eikōn tou theou* associated with *eulogeō*, but Genesis 2:7 introduces *emphysaō*, the act of breathing in a life-giving Spirit, that is, imparting a living soul to the dust of earth. In what follows I will trace how the conceptualization of *eikōn* get anchored in performance, focused on the gesture of blessing and inbreathing by engaging the New Testament, apostolic and patristic writings, and hagiography in the example of the Syrian stylites.

Eikōn in the New Testament

Eikōn appears in the New Testament with a range of meanings. In the Gospels the term is mentioned only in connection with the image of the emperor on coins, and here *eikōn* is conflated with *homoiōsis*.[4] By contrast, Paul writes about *eikōn* as Christ, the gospel, and as the bodies of the saints who have modeled themselves on the Firstborn: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:13–15).[5] Paul equates *eikōn* with Christ the incarnate *Logos*. This paradigm then becomes invested in the bodies of the saints, who embody and act out the *eikōn* of Christ: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to conform (*symmorphoi*) to the image (*eikōn*) of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).[6] The saints are called *symmorphoi*, meaning "coshaped," sharing the form of Christ. Thus in becoming *eikones* of Christ, the elect model their entire behavior [form] on Christ. This concept of *eikōn* as mimesis-performance has left traces in patristic writing and the Syriac stylite cults.

In the New Testament, *eikōn tou theou* is also associated with divine blessing and as a conveyor of the Lord's will. Blessing or *eulogeō* is a gesture of imparting spirit.[7] Christ is *eulogēmenos*, "the blessed one,"[8] because he is a channel of the Holy Spirit. He is overshadowed (*episkiazō*) by the divine *pneuma* at his baptism and the Transfiguration. In both instances, the Holy Spirit spreading over him articulates visually and sonically the divine will: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:16–17).[9] Similar is the manifestation of *pneuma* at the Transfiguration: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him!'" (Matt. 17:5).[10] The performative *eulogeō* here causes the Spirit to descend in Christ.[11] Blessing also triggers the agency of divine *pneuma* when Christ enacts the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and when he establishes the bread and wine of the Last Supper as the prototype of the Eucharist.[12] In performing blessing, *eulogeō*, Christ causes the energies of the Holy Spirit to descend into matter.[13]

Eikōn in the Patristic Writings

The patristic writings also attest to the currency of this understanding of *eikōn* as inspiriting. Anca Vasiliu offers an in-depth engagement with patristic theory of *eikōn* in the period 370–90, including Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil of Caesarea.[14] The lower and upper limits of *eikōn* are extended by the texts of St. Athanasius of Alexandria in the early fourth century and those of John of Damascus (d. after 750), so her monograph offers a comprehensive analysis of the Mediterranean image theory in Greek. Vasiliu approaches the subject as a question of transmission of ideas from Plato through Neoplatonism to Christianity, presenting several concurrent definitions of *eikōn*: (1) as a metaphor, such as the image of fire signifying *pneuma*; (2) as man made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27), suggesting the possibility of recognizing the invisible and uncreated divine in the

unique creation of man; and (3) as a partner to *logos*. Vasiliu is interested in how the inherited philosophical thought succeeds or fails to shape the Christian *eikōn* and in the transition from *eikōn* understood as an open book to *eikōn* as incarnation. On my part, I am interested in how the patristic concept of *eikōn* inflects the art making and religious practice and, more specifically, how *eikōn* becomes a liturgical performance.

Gregory of Nyssa in *De hominis opificio* focuses on Genesis 1:27 and explains "likeness" (*homoiōma*) as "the virtues that humanity shares with divinity." Just like a painter puts colors on his tablet, so too the Creator embeds his virtues in his creation; an idea that has a precedent in Paul's writings.[15] Later on, Gregory refutes the philosophical position treating man as a microcosmos of the created universe by insisting on the definition that man is an *eikōn tou theou*.[16] Gregory then posits the question: What makes current humanity different from the original man? Evil had seeped in; this change is announced in scripture in the phrase "male and female he created them." The Fall is manifested in the split from singularity to a gender duality.[17]

What was this original *eikōn tou theou* that humanity failed to sustain? It is defined by imitation: "For an image is properly so called if it keeps its resemblance to the prototype; but if imitation be prevented from its subject, the thing is something else, and no longer an image of the subject."[18] *Mimēsis* should be understood as performance rather than representation because what is shared between God and man is virtues, and virtues are sustained in action, not in depiction.[19]

The next question is what constitutes the difference between the Godhead and *eikōn*: the former is uncreated, the latter created.[20] Finally, Gregory sets an analogy between *eikōn* and *charis*, stating that they participate in many things without sharing the nature of these things: "For the image is not in part of our nature, nor is grace in any one of the things found in that nature, but this power extends equally to all nature."[21] Through the concept of *charis* as divine energy embedded in matter, the reader is invited to consider *eikōn* in similar terms: as the presence of Spirit in matter. Yet, Gregory never explicitly states this definition of *eikōn* as "inspirited matter"; it emerges obliquely in the way the analogy *charis* vis-à-vis *eikōn* equates spirit (*pneuma*) with virtues (*aretai*).

Vasiliu analyzes in great depth the same passages from Gregory of Nyssa. What I would like to foreground in her interpretation is the recognition that *eikōn* is defined not as an analogue/representation but as imitation/performance.[22] *Eikōn* manifests the grandeur of the human; "image" is uniquely associated with this first human being, and it forms the special link between the uncreated and created.[23] This original *eikōn* does not share in the typical relation between copy and prototype, what Vasiliu calls "image as analogue," and thus it deviates from the Platonic image as representation.[24] In fact, Gregory's *eikōn tou theou* created through *mimēsis* as a reflexive action and mirroring suggests to me the possibility of recognizing the formation of the concept of the performative icon in patristic thought predicated on Paul's model of the saints sustaining virtue. This *eikōn tou theou* cannot be reduced entirely to language and the product of intellect, but it manifests itself in the act of incarnation.[25] Iconicity, according to Gregory, is the highest state, connecting human and divine; it is a changeable, unstable state, and humanity has fallen from it but it can recuperate it. *Eikōn*, specifically *eikōn tou theou* is thus predicated on a performative paradigm, the aspiration to raise to and to return to God.[26]

Mirroring plays an important role in Gregory's performative paradigm of *eikōn*. The mind/spirit (*nous*) reflects the Lord's light of the good and beautiful, and it thereby enables the body/matter to participate in the divine:

> The mind/spirit (*nous*) is as some mirror formed by the figure (*character*) of the reflected [divine], by this analogy the nature managed by the *nous* is set up in a similar way, it is adorned by the *nous* at hand, like some mirror of a mirror [. . .] and so the transmission of the ugliness of matter reaches through the nature to the *nous*, so that the image of God is no longer seen in the figure expressed by that which was molded according to it; for the *nous*, setting the idea of good like a mirror behind the back, turns off the incident rays of the effulgence of the good, and it receives into itself the impress of the shapelessness of matter.[27]

It is clear that the link of mind/spirit to God is set in a such parallel relationship as mind to body. The perfect state is that of an ideal mir-

ror, reflecting beauty and goodness. If the mirror is tampered with, the reflection is lost, and so both mind and body fall away from divinity and lose their ability to enact an *eikōn tou theou*. The Greek uses the word *nous* ("mind"), which is rendered as *animus* in John Scotus Eriugena's Latin translation of 862–64.[28] This in itself shows the reception of Gregory's text, equating "mind" to "soul," and seeing in this unique entity—the soul—the principle of mirroring that generates *eikōn tou theou*.

Turning to the writings of Basil of Caesarea, we discover further solidification of the conceptualization of *eikōn* as performance. In his Homilies X and XI (*De creatione hominis*), he addresses Genesis 1:26 and explains that in order to sustain being an *eikōn* of God, the human being has to model one's own likeness (*homoiōsis*) continuously to that of the Lord.[29] Iconicity thus is defined as a ceaseless action:

> "Let us make the human being according to our image [*eikona*] and likeness [*homoiōsin*]"; we possess the former through creation and the latter we acquire through our will. According to the first, we are given to be born in the *eikōn tou theou*, but according to the will a being is formed in us according to the likeness of God. What the will reveals is that our nature possesses the force, but it is through action that we achieve [likeness]. In creating us, did not the Lord anticipate the precaution, saying "create" and "in resemblance," if he did not simultaneously give us the power to arrive at resemblance, and if it had not been our proper power through which we acquired the resemblance to God? And so God created us capable in power to resemble him. And given the power to model ourselves in a resemblance of God, we are the artists producing resemblance to God, eventually receiving the recompense for our efforts, and [this is] unlike a portrait produced by the hand of the artist, which is inert. In the end, the result of our resemblance does not become a praise of some other [artist], created without purpose, but comes upon us. For in a portrait you do not praise the portrait itself but the painter who produced it. As opposed to I being the object of praise and not someone else, I have let myself become in resemblance of God. In *eikōn* I have the rational essence, and in resemblance I become Christian.[30]

The human being possesses the power to model oneself ceaselessly to God. Basil is careful to separate this human performance of *eikōn* from the object made by a painter. The embodied performative *eikōn* brings praise to the human being who continuously adjusts its likeness to God as opposed to the skill of the painter to imitate likeness pictorially.[31] Likeness is action, a process of becoming through which one sustains being an *eikōn tou theou*. Basil's presentation shows *eikōn* as an image inscribed in the structure of the living through the action of modeling, as opposed to a painted representation that gives no praise to the object but heaps lauds on the painter. This performative aspect of Basil's theory of iconicity was suppressed in iconophile writing in the period of Iconoclasm (730–843). It is only now in returning to patristic writings that we can begin to excavate this earlier nonrepresentation concept of *eikōn*.[32] The performative icon gives us a new insight in Byzantine Iconoclasm as a debate on what should be identified as an image: representation or liturgical action (for instance, the Eucharist is an example of this performative, nonrepresentational iconicity).[33]

We can find further confirmation of the performative *eikōn* in John Chrysostom's writings (347–407). He designates as "icon" the Christian mysteries, as for instance the sacrament of marriage: "Rather when they [the bride and groom] come together, they make not an inanimate image (*apsychon eikōn*) or the image of an earthly creature, but the image of God himself."[34] The bride and groom form an *eikōn tou theou*, not a lifeless, inanimate image, but a living image of God, in which they recover, albeit temporally, a prelapsarian perfection. Marriage as a *mysterion* ("sacrament"),[35] sanctified by the Church, thus offers us a glimpse into the conceptualization of *eikōn* as a participation in a sacrament.[36]

In patristic writings, *eikōn tou theou* is central in the definition of what it means to be a Christian; it designates the process of becoming one. It is defined by constant action, of modeling one's self to the resemblance of God, of reflecting likeness just like the soul reflects the goodness and beauty of God, and of achieving iconicity by participation in the mysteries.[37] Based on this discovery, I would like to propose a much more expansive definition of *eikōn tou theou* in the period before Iconoclasm (730–847) as a performative entity—the sacraments—showing the descent and dwelling of the Spirit in matter.

It is the vitae of stylite saints that offer rich evidence about *eikōn* as *empsychōsis*. The stylites entered the realm of sanctity by mastering the suffering of their bodies as they stood for prolonged periods on a solitary column and reduced to a minimum the intake of food and drink. They possessed powers to heal and interact with the supernatural issued through their closeness to the divine spirit. *Pneuma* manifested itself optically and olfactorily; it overshadowed their bodies, reified in the smell of burning incense, and in the breath of healing they exhaled in the presence of the sick.[38] The descent of *pneuma* in their bodies enacted a Christo-*mimēsis*: just as Christ at his baptism reveals himself as being an *eikōn tou theou*, so too the column saints become like Christ when *pneuma* descends in their bodies. These ideas are expressed in the tokens they distributed to pilgrims.[39] The following examples from the vita of St. Symeon the Stylite the Younger (521–92) attest to this perception that the *Hagion Pneuma* courses through his body: "And as he was praying, the Holy Spirit descended in his heart and filled him with wisdom and knowledge as the saint has demanded.[40] . . . for truly Symeon was the lamp of the Holy Spirit.[41] . . . And holding the incense in his right hand he offered it to God and suddenly like flame the smoke of perfume rose up."[42] Through prayer, the saint activates the descent of the Holy Spirit into his body. As a result, he can burn incense without the use of fire, and by extension he can heal by exhaling divine *pneuma*: "Again some [people] brought before [the saint] a blind man, and [Symeon] blowing (*emphysēsa*) towards [the afflicted] eyes said: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, recover your sight!' And immediately looking up he saw everybody, and crying and stretching his hands towards heaven he glorified the Lord and his saint, for he was seeing the light after many years."[43]

The healing comes out as an act of breathing out, *emphysaō*. The saint's *pneuma* has vivifying powers because it is in fact the Holy Spirit residing in the saintly body.[44] And again when a certain afflicted pilgrim beseeches the saint for healing, he says: "If you want, O Holy man, you could heal me through the Savior of the world living (*enoikeō*) in you!"[45] St. Symeon enacts a Christo-*mimēsis*, based on the shared indwelling (*enoikēsis*) of *pneuma*. In exhaling it, he heals: "This servant of God, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit (*plērēs tou pneumatos tou hagiou*), he turned to the West, breathing out (*emphysēsa*)."[46]

In reading the stylite examples together with the two Genesis accounts (Gen. 1:26–28 and 2:7), they uncover for us an alternative understanding of what *eikōn tou theou* means: a base matter animated by divine breath through *eulogeō* and *emphysaō*. *Eikōn* is a body/matter imbued with *Hagion Pneuma*. This conclusion is further confirmed by Pseudo-Leontius in the early eighth century, who writes: "An *eikōn* of God is the human being who has transformed himself according to the image (*eikōn*) of God, and especially the one who has received the dwelling (*enoikēsin*) of the Holy Spirit. I justly give honor to the icon of the servants of God and *proskynēsis* to the house of the Holy Spirit."[47] In this essentialist definition, "icon" emerges as the living body of the saint in which the Holy Spirit resides. The stylites themselves model and legitimize their power on the example of the eucharistic liturgy.[48]

EIKŌN: LITURGY, SPIRIT, AND HUMAN ASCENT

By far, the most complex "icon" in Byzantium was the liturgy unfolding in the sacred space. Here the intersection of two vectors—descent of *pneuma* and a human ascent—produced an icon as a perfect mirroring structure embedded in the bodies of the faithful. This conceptualization of iconicity survives in the iconoclast definition of image as ecclesiastically sanctioned ritual performance. In the 740s, the iconoclast emperor Constantine V wrote in his *Peuseis* (*Inquiries*) that "an *eikōn* of his [Christ's] body is the bread, which we accept, as it morphs (*morphazō*n) into his flesh, so as to become a *typos* of his body."[49] *Eikōn* is the product of imprinting/branding (*typōsis*) performed by the descending Holy Spirit; this action transforms the bread into the body of Christ. Here iconicity is produced through the Holy Spirit's descent and branding (*typōsis*) of matter. The faithful then receive this Eucharist as *eikōn* through their mouths.

In my earlier work I have uncovered how *typōsis* marks the action of the Holy Spirit branding matter.[50] If something is a *typos*, it carries the seal (*sphragis*) and speaks the will of its source, and in this case that is the fire of the Holy Spirit.[51] It is significant how the vital inbreathing of Adam, the stylites, and the Eucharist, all present the concept of *eikōn*

as a product of the mouth, of *pneuma* understood as breath, spirit, and fire blessing, which is branding, infusing, and transforming matter.

Medieval writers next defined the Church as a *typos* and *eikōn*, a space embodying Spirit in matter. This interpretation is featured in the liturgical commentary, or *Mystagogia*, of Maximus the Confessor, written circa 630. Born in Constantinople in 580, at the age of thirty he obtained the post of first secretary in the imperial administration, only to renounce it soon after for the monastic habit. Maximus's *exegesis* of the liturgy exemplifies what is best known as the "Alexandrian" mystical tradition, which stood in opposition to the historically bent Antiochian model.[52] Yet, Maximus's vision, especially his discussion of the divine liturgy as a process of divinization, or *theōsis*, gives us an insight into the spiritual experience produced by the cathedral rite in Hagia Sophia. These very excerpts from the *Mystagogia* reappear in the later medieval recensions of *Ekklesiastikē historia*, written by Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople (715–30).[53]

For Maximus the Confessor, the Church is simultaneously the material structure, the corporate body of the faithful, and the site of unfolding mystical rituals.[54] So far, scholars have drawn on this material identifying the Church as icon in order to argue for the symbolic interpretation of the ecclesiastical building.[55] The gathered scriptural, apostolic, patristic, and hagiographical evidence heretofore defines iconicity as "the process of imprinting matter with Spirit, transforming the inanimate into animate." Therefore, in calling the Church an *eikōn*, Byzantine writers aimed to engage the performative paradigm of the holy. Is not the Eucharist such an example of the Spirit descending and transforming matter? And if the Eucharist is the sacramental reality of the Church and the means through which the Incarnation is enacted in space, then shouldn't we pay more attention to the moments when *eikōn* and *typos* identify the church building and recognize in them the process of inspiriting matter? For instance, in his *Mystagogia*, Maximus states: "At the outset of his speculations that blessed old man [Pseudo-Dionysius] began saying that the holy Church presents a *typos* and *eikōn* of God through the performance of the same operations which it copies from Him (*mimēsis*) and reproduces (*typos*)."[56] Maximus envisions two entities, the Church as the created world and God, set in mirroring

reciprocity (*mimēsis*) united through *typōsis*. Mirroring is predicated on the Neoplatonic understanding of *mimēsis*—it designates the process of reflection, such as the soul reflecting divine beauty and good. We already encountered this conceptualization in Gregory of Nyssa.[57] This mirroring possesses a point of contact defined by *typōsis*: a replication established by *pneuma* branding matter. Although this particular excerpt does not specifically mention the word "spirit," *pneuma* is implicitly present in the concept of *typos*. As we saw earlier, *typōsis* marks the descent of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist.

Maximus also defines the Church as producing a series of *eikones*: of the entire visible and invisible worlds, of the material world, of the human, and finally of the soul. The trajectory goes from the celestial through the terrestrial to the soul.[58] What connects the rings of this chain is the act of mirroring—each segment faithfully embodies and reflects the source from which the chain emanates, and this vision is sublimated in the following words:

> And again the divine apostle [Paul] said: "[God's] invisible aspects are clearly seen through his creations" (Rom. 1:20). And if invisible things are seen clearly through the visible things as is written, then [it will be all the more possible] for those who excel in spiritual contemplation to understand the invisible/ineffable through the visible/material. For the presencing vision (*symbolikē theōria*) of metaphysical entities through visible things is a pneumatic experience (*epistēmē*) and knowledge (*noēsis*) of visible things through invisible. For things that are entirely significative of each other must necessarily have entirely true and clear reflections (*emphaseis*) of each other, and have a flawless relation between them.[59]

Maximus builds the interconnection between the material creation and God's invisible aspects, thus establishing a perfect reciprocity between the celestial and the terrestrial. He speaks of symbol as the simultaneous presencing of spirit and matter, as opposed to our modern conceptualization of the emptiness of the sign and symbol.[60] For Maximus, the condition of living in postlapsarian time determines how the only contact with the divine is in the transient and ephemeral union estab-

lished only through the symbol ("to throw together and in the same place," from *syn-*, "together," and *ballō-*, "to throw," as opposed to *apobolē*, "illusion," the act of throwing something away from the target). By extension, Maximus's *symbolikē theōria* is the vision that brings together the material and ineffable. It has a reciprocal mirror reflection that is the spiritual experience (*pneumatikē epistēmē*) and *noēsis*. *Pneumatikē epistēmē* makes the energies of the ineffable corporeally sentient. Thus paired, presencing vision (*symbolikē theōria*) and spiritual experience (*pneumatikē epistēmē*) give rise to two simultaneous and opposing vectors: a descent and an ascent; they interlock, forming the perfect mirroring that actualizes an *eikōn*.

CONCLUSION

The textual tradition encompassing scripture, patristic writing, the vita of St. Symeon the Stylite the Younger, and the *Mystagogia* of Maximus the Confessor points to an alternative understanding of *eikōn tou theou* beyond representation. According to the texts presented here, iconicity forms a sacred space, created through participation, in which the inspirited human being becomes an *eikōn tou theou*, like a mirror reflecting divine light. This understanding of *eikōn* as performance bears particular significance for the ecclesiastical rites, and more specifically in the congregational participation in the psalmody. My new book on the Hagia Sophia explores exactly this aspect of nonrepresentational iconicity as the exhalation of breath in chant.

NOTES

1. Bissera Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

2. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν, καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς. καὶ ηὐλόγησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς λέγων (Gen. 1:25–26); taken from *Septuaginta*, ed. A. Rahlfs (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935; rpt., 1975).

3. καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν (Gen. 2:7).

4. Luke 20:24.

5. ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν· ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως (Col. 1:15).

6. ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισε συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς (Rom. 8:29); English KJV.

7. Bissera Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 28–36 (with related website, http://www.thesensualicon.com). Sebastian Brock, *Fire from Heaven: Studies in Syriac Theology and Liturgy*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

8. Matt. 21:9, 23:39, 11:9–10; Luke 1:68, 13:35, 19:38; John 12:13; Rom. 1:25, 9:5; 2 Cor. 1:3, 11:31; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3.

9. καὶ βαπτισθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέβη εὐθὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνεῴχθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδε τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν καὶ ἐρχόμενον ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν· καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα (Matt. 3:13–17, and also Mark 1:9–11, Luke 3:21–22).

10. ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἰδοὺ νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα· αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε (Matt. 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:34–35). On *episkiazō*, see also Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 142.

11. On "performative" as an utterance, performing an action as opposed to being constative, see J. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

12. Mark 6:41, Luke 9:16 (feeding the multitude), Matt. 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 24:30, 1 Cor. 10:16 (Last Supper).

13. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 17–44.

14. A. Vasiliu, *Eikōn: L'image dans le discours des trois Cappadociens* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2010).

15. Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 5, sec. 1 (PG 44, cols. 136–37). (PG = *Patrologia Graeca*)

16. Ibid., bk. 16, secs. 1–3, PG 44, cols. 178–80.

17. Ibid., bk. 16, secs. 5–8, PG 44, cols. 180–81.

18. Ἡ γὰρ εἰκὼν, εἰ μὲν ἔχει τὴν πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον ὁμοιότητα, κυρίως τοῦτο κατ ονομάζεται. Εἰ δὲ παρενεχθείη τοῦ προκειμένου ἡ μίμησις, ἄλλο τι, καὶ οὐκ εἰκὼν ἐκείνου τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστι; from Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 16, sec. 3 (PG 44, col. 180B). English translation in P. Schaff, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second series (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–91), 5:750. Grégoire de Nysse, *La creation de l'homme*, trans. J. Laplace, Sources chrétiennes 6 (Paris: Cerf, 2002 [1944]).

19. Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 16, sec. 3, and bk. 5, sec. 1 (PG 44, cols. 180, 136–37).

20. Ibid., bk. 16, secs. 12–14 (PG 44, col. 184).

21. Οὐ γὰρ ἐν μέρει τῆς φύσεως ἡ εἰκὼν, οὐδὲ ἐν τινι τῶν καθ᾽ θεωροθμένων ἡ χάρις· ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἅπαν τὸ γένος ἐπί σης ἡ τοιαύτη διήκει δύναμις (Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 16, sec. 17 [PG 44, col. 185 C]).

22. Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 115–28, esp. 116 and 127.

23. Ibid., 115–28, esp. 118–19.

24. Ibid., 121–22.

25. Ibid., 122.

26. Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 16, secs. 7 and 17 (PG 44, cols. 180, 185), and Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 125–27.

27. οἷον τι κατρόπτρον τῷ χαρακτῆρα τοῦ ἐμφαινομένου μορφούμενου· κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀναλογίαν, καὶ τὴν οἰκονομουμένην ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἔχεσθαι τοῦ νοῦ λογιζόμεθα, καὶ τῷ παρακειμένῳ κάλλει καὶ αὐτὴν κοσμεῖσθαι, οἷον τι κατόπτρου κάτοπτρον γινομένη, . . . καὶ οὗτος ἐπ᾽ αύτὸν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὕλην αἴσχους διὰ τῆς φύσεως ἡ διάδοσις γίνεται, ὡς μηκωετι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνα ἐν τῷ χαρακτῆρι καθορᾶσθαι τοῦ πλάσματος. οἷον γὰρ τι κάτοπτρον κατὰ νώτου τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἰδέαν ὁ νοῦς ποιησάμενος, ἐκβάλλει μὲν τῆς ἐκλάμψεως τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τὰς ἐμφάσεις (Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 12, sec. 10 [PG 44, cols. 161C, 164A]). See also the discussion of Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 128–33. French translation renders *nous* as "spirit" and "soul"; see Grégoire de Nysse, *La creation de l'homme*, 131.

28. Maïeul Cappuyns, "Le *De imagine* de Grégoire de Nysse traduit par Jean Scot Érigène," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 32 (1965): 205–62.

29. Basil of Caesarea, *De origine hominis*, Homilies X and XI of *Hexhaemeron*, in *Basile de Césarée: Sur l'origine de l'homme. Hom. X et X de l'Hexhaemeron*, intro., texte critique, traduction et notes Alexis Smets and Michel van Esbroeck, Sources chrétiennes 160 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1970), 13–17, 74–80, 116–26, on questions of authorship and authenticity. Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 249–87.

30. "Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ᾽ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν." Τὸ μὲν τῇ κτίσει ἔχομεν· τὸ δὲ ἐκπροαιρέσεως κατορθοῦμεν. Ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ

κατασκευῇ συνυπάρχει ἡμῖν τὸ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα γεγενῆσθαι Θεοῦ· ἐκ προαιρέσεως ἡμῖν κατορθοῦται τὸ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν εἶναι Θεοῦ. Τοῦτο δὲ τὸ κατὰ προαίρεσιν, δυνάμει ἡμῖν ἐνυπάρχει· ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ ἑαυτοῖς ἐπάγομεν. Εἰ μὴ προλαβὼν εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος ποιῶν ἡμᾶς· "Ποιήσωμεν" καὶ "καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν," εἰ μὴ τὴν τοῦ γενέσθαι καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν δύναμιν ἡμῖν ἐχαρίσατο, οὐκ ἄν τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐξουσίᾳ τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν ἐδεξάμεθα. Νῦν μέντοι δυνάμει ἡμᾶς ἐποίησεν ὁμοιωτικοὺς Θεῷ. Δύναμιν δὲ δοὺς πρὸς τὸ ὁμοιοῦσθαι Θεῷ, ἀφῆκεν ἡμᾶς ἐργάτας εἶναι τῆς πρὸς Θεὸν ὁμοιώσεως, ἵνα ἡμέτερος ᾖ τῆς ἐργασίας ὁ μισθός, ἵνα μὴ ὥσπερ παρὰ ζωγράφου γενόμεναι, εἰκῇ κείμεναι, ἵνα μὴ τὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ὁμοιώσεως ἄλλῳ ἔπαινον φέρῃ. Ὅταν γὰρ τὴν εἰκόνα ἴδῃς ἀκριβῶς μεμορφωμενην πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπον, οὐ τὴν εἰκόνα ἐπαινεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὸν ζωγράφον θαυμάζεις. Ἵνα τοίνυν τὸ θαῦμα ἐμὸν γένηται καὶ μὴ ἀλλότριον, ἐμοὶ κατέλιπε τὸ καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν Θεοῦ γενέσθαι. Κατ᾽ εἰκόνα γὰρ ἔχω τὸ λογικὸς εἶναι, καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν δὲ γίνομαι ἐν τῷ Χριστιανὸς γενέσθαι; from Basil of Caesarea, *De creatione hominis*, bk. 1, sec. 16, vv. 1–20, in *Basile de Césarée*: *Sur l'origine de l'homme*, 6–9.

31. Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 272–79.

32. Ibid., 276–87, 299–334.

33. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 57–96.

34. ὅταν δὲ συνίωσιν, οὐκ εἰκόνα ἄψυχον, οὐδὲ εἰκόνα τινὸς τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦντες τοῦ Θεοῦ (Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia XII in Epistolam ad Colossenses*, PG 62, cols. 299–392, esp. col. 387C). I encountered this passage while reading about early music in Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Washington, DC: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983; original German, 1973), 132n80.

35. In a Pauline sense, the *mysterion* is "a visible appearance that is nearer of the reality it represents, of the heavenly liturgy of the risen Lord"; Robert F. Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It*, Paul G. Manolis Distinguished Lectures (Berkeley: InterOrthodox Press, 2006), 141.

36. Similarly, the sacrament of baptism is a condition of iconicity; see Basil of Caesarea, Homily X, sec. 17, in *Basile de Césarée: Sur l'origine de l'homme*, 210–13, and Basil, *De baptismo*, bk. 1, sec. 7, in *Basile de Césarée: Sur le baptême*, trans. Jeanne Ducatillon, Sources chrétiennes 160 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1970), 126–27.

37. Without recognizing the patristic origins of this idea, Mircea Eliade arrives at the same characterization of the religious man: he is not a given, but results from the process of fashioning oneself in the mirror of the gods; see Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Task (New York: Harcourt, 1987; original French, 1957), 100, 105.

38. Susan Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 186–200. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 17–44.

39. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 23–28.

40. Ταῦτα αὐτοῦ προσευχομένου, κατῆλθεν ἐξαίφνης ὥσπερ λαμπὰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, καθάπερ ἠτήσατο, καὶ ἐνέπλησεν αὐτὸν σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως; from *Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 32, in *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521–592)*, ed. and trans. P. van den Ven, Subsidia Hagiographica, 32 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962–70).

41. λύχνος γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἐτύγχανε τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (*Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 34).

42. καὶ κρατῶν θυμίαμα ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ προσέφερε τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἄνευ πυρὸς ἀνέβαινε καπνὸς εὐωδίας (*Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 37).

43. Πάλιν τινὲς προσήνεγκαν τῷ ἁγίῳ τυφλόν, καὶ ἐμφυσήσας εἰς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν· "Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀνάβλεψον." Καὶ εὐθέως ἀτενίσας εἶδε πάντας, καὶ κλαίων καὶ τανύων τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐδόξαζε τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἅγιον αὐτοῦ δοῦλον, ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν ἐτῶν εἶδε τὸ φῶς (*Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 250).

44. St. Symeon is described as overshadowed by the Holy Spirit (*Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 69, sec. 16; chap. 103, sec. 4, chap. 118, sec. 45), or continually raped by the Holy Spirit, (*Vita S. Symeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 127, sec. 4; chap. 160, sec. 17; chap. 187, sec. 1).

45. Εἰ θέλεις, ἅγιε, δύνασαί με ἰάσασθαι διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν σοὶ σωτῆρος τοῦ κόσμου (*Vita S. Simeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 177, vv. 2–3); and Ὁ Θεός με ἰάσατο ὁ ἐνοικῶν ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ δούλῳ Συμεών (chap. 197, vv. 23–24).

46. Ὁ δὲ ἀληθινὸς δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ, πλήρης ὢν πνεύματος ἁγίου, στραφεὶς πρὸς τὴν δύσιν καὶ ἐμφυσήσας εἶπεν (*Vita S. Simeonis Stylitae Junioris*, chap. 151, vv. 7–9). The same text offers other instances of healing through "breath" (*Vita S. Simeonis Stylitae Junioris* chap. 129, v. 27; chap. 168, v. 25; chap. 250, v. 2). Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 33–34, 36.

47. Εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ γεγονὼς ἄνθρωπος καὶ μάλιστα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐνοίκησιν δεξάμενος. Δικαίως οὖν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ δούλων τιμῶ καὶ προσκυνῶ καὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος; from Pseudo-Leontius, or George of Cyprus, in Hans Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Zeit vor dem Bilderstreit*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur, 139 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), 347.

48. Harvey, *Scenting Salvation*, 181–86.

49. Καὶ εἰκών ἐστι τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄρτος ὃν λαμβάνομεν, μορφάζων τὴν σάρκα αὐτοῦ, ὡς εἰς τύπον τοῦ σώματος ἐκείνου γινόμενος (PG 100, col. 337B); from Constantine V's *Peuseis* (*Inquiries*), recorded in Patriarch Nicephorus, *Antirrheticus II adversus Constantinum Copronymum*; reprinted in *Textus byzantinos ad iconomachiam pertinentes*, ed. H. Hennerhof (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 55n167. On the *Peuseis*, see Stephen Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V*, Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium, 384 (Louvain: Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium, 1977), 37–52. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 57–96.

50. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 28–36, 64, 73.

51. Ibid., 28–36, 64, 73.

52. R. Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1966). Robert Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34/35 (1980–81): 45–76. Hans-Joachim Shulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York: Pueblo, 1986). On the way Maximus legitimized the views of Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius, see Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985). Also see *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Dom Julian Stead, O.S.B. (Still River, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1982), and *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. P. Blowers and R. Wilken (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 13, 19.

53. *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, ed. P. Meyendorff (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), chaps. 41–43 (from Maximus the Confessor).

54. Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, chaps. 2–5 (PG 91, cols. 667–84).

55. S. Ćurčić, "Architecture as Icon," and K. McVey, "Spirit Embodied: The Emergence of Symbolic Interpretations of Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture," in *Architecture as Icon: Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Art Museum; distributed by Yale University Press, 2010), 3–37, 39–73.

56. Τὴν τοίνυν ἁγίαν Ἐκκλησίαν κατᾶ πρώτην θεωρίας ἐπιβολήν, τῦπον καὶ εἰκόνα Θεοῦ φέρειν, ἔλεγεν ὁ μακάριος γέρων ἐκείνος· ὡς τὴν αὐτὴν αὐτῷ κατὰ μίμησιν καὶ τύπον ἐνεργειαν ἔχοθσαν (Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, chap. 1 [PG 91, col. 664D]). English translation from *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man*, 65.

57. Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, bk. 12 (PG 44, cols. 161C, 164A), and Vasiliu, *Eikōn*, 128–33.

58. Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogia*, chaps. 2–5 (PG 91, cols. 667–84).

59. καὶ πάλιν· "τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα καθορᾶται," φησὶν ὁ θεῖος Ἀπόστολος. Καὶ εἰ καθορᾶται διὰ τῶν φαινομένων τὰ μὴ φαινόμενα, καθὼς γέγραπται, πολλῷ δὴ καὶ διὰ τῶν μὴ φαινομένων τοῖς θεωρίᾳ πνευματικῇ προσανέχουσι τὰ φαινόμενα νοηθήσεται. Τῶν γὰρ νοητῶν ἡ διὰ τῶν ὁρατῶν συμβολικὴ θεωρία, τῶν ὁρομένων ἐστὶ διὰ τῶν ἀοράτων πνευματικὴ ἐπιστήμη καὶ νόησις. Δεῖ γὰρ τὰ ἀλλήλων ὄντα δηλωτικὰ πάντως ἀληθεῖς καὶ ἀριδήλους τὰς ἀλλήλων ἔχειν ἐμφάσεις καὶ τὴν ἐπ' αὐταῖς σχέσιν ἀλώβητον (Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, chap. 2 [PG 91, col. 669D]).

60. *Symbolon* as "unified with that which it signifies," such as the sacraments; see *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. Lampe (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), B.5, 1282, and Alexander Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare Dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius the Areopagita, with Special Reference to Its Predecessors in the Eastern Christian Tradition*, Analekta Vlatadōn, 59 (Thessaloniki: Patriarchikon Idryma, Paterikōn Meletōn, 1994), 199–202. See also Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes*, 135–60.

PART TWO

Anthropological and Cultural Treatments

CHAPTER FOUR

Shaping the Sacred

Icons, Processions, and the Presence of the Holy

KIRSTIN NOREEN

The Lateran icon of Christ, currently found on the altar of the Sancta Sanctorum, was one of the most powerful and influential images in medieval Rome (figs. 4.1 and 4.2).[1] From at least the ninth century until the mid-sixteenth century, the icon played a key role in one of the principal events of the liturgical year: the celebration of the Assumption feast on the evening of August 14–15.[2] For that ceremony, the icon was removed from the Sancta Sanctorum and then transported through the city streets in a well-orchestrated procession that unified some of the city's most important Christian and ancient monuments. On extraordinary occasions, during times of attack, plague, or famine, the Lateran icon might again be processed through the streets to serve as a palladium, or safeguard, that could assure the security of the city and its citizens.[3] During the majority of the year, however, the icon would remain on the altar of the papal chapel, where it would serve as a backdrop for the Mass or might be involved in ceremonies such as that celebrating Easter Sunday when the pope would ritually reenact the resurrection of Christ by kissing the image's feet and proclaiming three

Figure 4.1 Lateran icon of Christ known as the *Acheropita*, after the 1996 restoration. Sancta Sanctorum, Rome. Photo: Archivio Fotografico dei Musei Vaticani.

Figure 4.2 View of altar. Sancta Sanctorum, Rome. Photo: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, E111106.

times, "The Lord is risen from the grave!"[4] Within the Sancta Sanctorum, the potential participants in the papal Mass or the Easter liturgy would have been limited by the small size of the chapel and its restricted location within the papal palace.[5]

As should be clear from the important ritual role that the icon played in Rome, the Lateran image was a very significant representation of Christ. The icon was associated with a miraculous origin: the evangelist Luke had started the painting on a panel that was then finished by God himself through the hand of an angel.[6] The divine quality of the icon's creation is reflected in its name, *Acheropita*, corrupted from the Greek term *acheiropoieton*, meaning "not made by hand."[7] A twelfth-century description by Nicholas Maniacutius helps us to understand the role of icons in the Middle Ages: Maniacutius tells us that the divinely created Lateran icon provided a physical memory of Christ for his disciples when he could no longer be corporeally present.[8] The presence of Christ, as expressed through the pictorial representation, was particularly important because of his ascension and the lack of accessible bodily relics.[9] Unfortunately, God's handiwork and that physical presence of Christ are less apparent today when one examines the painted panels beneath the silver and gold revetment that currently obscures the image; centuries of ritual use, overpainting, and poor restoration have resulted in an original image that is barely perceptible. The poor condition of these panels makes it difficult to imagine the power that this image had in Rome, especially in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.[10] Here I will explore that power and through my discussion will touch on three main themes that have a broader relevance to holy images in general: the presentation of the sacred image, the meaning created through processional movement, and the reproduction of icons and the transfer of holiness through those copies. To demonstrate how traditions related to icons in the medieval period are still relevant today, I will end with a brief exploration of the contemporary use of holy representations through an examination of the role of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Los Angeles.

In contrast with medieval viewers, modern visitors to Rome can now purchase a ticket, enter the Sancta Sanctorum, and see—from up close—the opened icon on the altar. Alternatively, the faithful can ex-

perience the image from a short distance through one of three grills; however, from outside the chapel, it is almost impossible to view the image because of the reflective quality of both the glass and the metal revetment that now cover the icon. In the Middle Ages, an encounter with the image would have been very different. Prior to the addition of the metal revetment, likely donated in the early thirteenth century around the time of Innocent III (1198–1216), the full-length image of the enthroned Savior would have been covered with multiple silken veils that would have concealed the face of Christ.[11] This covering of the miraculous representation is not surprising considering the potential danger associated with a prolonged exposure to Christ's gaze, which was believed to cause blindness or even death, as two early thirteenth-century sources recount.[12]

The addition of the gilded silver cover would have demonstrated the importance of the image through its expensive materials, as layers of donated objects created a multifaceted surface to the icon: semiprecious stones, rings, enamel work, angels, hearts, and crowns illustrated the continuing devotion to the image and its perceived power.[13] As described by the Byzantine art historian Annemarie Weyl Carr, the silver revetment offers a place where the worshipper can exist "outside the icon yet within the image."[14] This idea is especially apparent in the lower corners of the cover where, crowded into the very margin of the frame, *ex-votos* provide a physical manifestation of devotion to the image (fig. 4.3). Such gifts demonstrate personal piety but also reinforce the power of Christ to intervene, to perform miracles, or to answer the prayers of the pious. Let me underscore that, although icons were often associated with human characteristics, such as weeping, bleeding, and shaking with excitement, these representations should not be mistaken for the divinity that they portray; icons serve as vehicles—as a means of communication—with the holy figure represented.[15] Gifts offered to the image were therefore gifts offered to Christ—who was beyond the image and outside of it. Figures of saints and the Virgin, created in relief in vertical strips along the metal cover, further serve as potential intercessors for the viewer and act as models of piety. Flanked by symbols of the evangelists, the enamel work shows the beginning and end of Christ's terrestrial existence with scenes of the Nativity and Crucifixion

Figure 4.3 Detail, lower portion of Lateran icon cover, after the 1996 restoration. Sancta Sanctorum, Rome. Photo: Archivio Fotografico dei Musei Vaticani.

that are mediated through Christ's baptism. Lower on the icon cover, small doors (fig. 4.4) located at the position of Christ's feet provide direct physical access to the surface of the icon and would have been used during the Assumption feast and on Easter Sunday when Christ's feet were washed with rose-scented water or ritually kissed. Representations on the doors reference the icon's caretakers and the miraculous origins for the image; these depictions, just as the doors themselves, provide a *revelatio* of the holy icon.[16]

One should keep in mind that not all icons, especially in the West, had elaborate metal covers. With some medieval images, adornment was limited to the most powerful parts of the representations, such as the golden hands of Mary that would intercede for the faithful, as in

Figure 4.4 Detail, doors of the Lateran icon cover, after the 1996 restoration. Sancta Sanctorum, Rome. Photo: Archivio Fotografico dei Musei Vaticani.

the icons from San Sisto (fig. 4.5) and the Pantheon or the lips that were likely covered in gold in the frescoed representations of saints Demetrius and Barbara of Santa Maria Antiqua.[17] In other instances, the surface of an icon could be transformed through the addition of objects, like the metal cross that would have originally been held by the Virgin in the icon of Santa Maria in Trastevere.[18] In contrast with this use of adornment to conceal a particularly salient body part or object, the revetment of the Lateran icon reverses the process and uncovers the head

Figure 4.5 *Madonna of San Sisto*, prior to restoration. Santa Maria del Rosario, Rome. Photo: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, E26810.

of Christ, which is further offset by a halo of semiprecious stones and pearls. Even though Christ's face was later repainted on a piece of canvas, its appearance is nonetheless quite dark, likely affected by centuries of smoke and soot.[19] The two-dimensional face provides a stark contrast with the scintillating, almost rippling, surface of the metal cover,[20] a contrast that would be even more apparent during an evening procession when the icon would be illuminated by the flickering light of burning torches and candles. The floating face of Christ draws in the viewer: Christ is the "light of the world" (John 1:9), but his miraculously created holy face would have been almost unseeable in the context of a nocturnal procession.[21]

This is relevant because Roman citizens most likely would have encountered the image during the evening procession celebrating the Assumption feast.[22] At that time, the icon was removed from the Sancta Sanctorum by the Confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore and was accompanied by torches and a bodyguard of butchers known as the *stizzi*—this bodyguard was necessary to protect the image from excessive devotion.[23] After slowly passing through the Lateran district and the Roman Forum on a well-established route, the procession culminated on the Esquiline Hill at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Stops along the route allowed clerics to ritually wash the feet of the enthroned image of Christ with rose-scented water mixed with basil; those feet could be accessed through small doors in the icon cover (fig. 4.4).

The Assumption procession also provided an opportunity for the representation of Christ to visit other Marian icons; the ritual encounter with images of Mary symbolized the celestial meeting of the Virgin and Christ celebrated in the Assumption feast. According to a twelfth-century source, the procession stopped in the Forum at the church of Santa Maria Nova (now Santa Francesca Romana), which contained a seventh-century icon of the Virgin and Child; there, the Lateran icon was set down in front of the church and the feet of Christ were washed.[24] Stopping next at the ancient Senate House (St. Hadrian's church), the Lateran icon proceeded to Santa Maria Maggiore, where Christ met with his mother, as depicted in another icon associated with the hand of St. Luke. This representation of Mary, later known as the *Salus Populi Romani* (*Savior of the Roman People*) was renowned for its intercessory

power.[25] In Santa Maria Maggiore, the Lateran icon was placed on the altar and, at the third hour on the morning of August 15, Mass was celebrated.[26]

The Lateran icon of Christ, therefore, played an integral role in the primary celebration of the Virgin Mary in Rome. The emphasis given to the Christ image may be explained in various ways. Maniacutius suggested that the procession served as a "remembrance of the Virgin's Assumption, when the Redeemer appeared on earth and placed her beside him on the throne"[27]; the two icons, both ascribed to the hand of St. Luke and associated with miraculous origins, served as the visual embodiment of Christ and the Virgin. The procession must also be read within a larger historical context, for the transportation of the Christ image from its residence in the Lateran palace of the pope to the center of pagan Rome marked the Christian *possesso* of the city.[28] The processional route evoked ancient imperial triumphs through its passage by the Colosseum, alongside the Arch of Constantine, through the Arch of Titus, and to the ancient Roman Curia in the Forum.

Carved stone reliefs created a lasting memory of the more ephemeral yearly celebration associated with the Assumption feast along the processional route in the Lateran neighborhood (fig. 4.6).[29] Picturing kneeling members of the confraternity responsible for caring for the icon or simply representing the image of Christ, these reliefs would have marked the path of the procession and the social institutions under the confraternity's control. Through these images, the procession created a permanent impression on the urban fabric of the city—a lasting memory of the religious celebration and a reminder that Christ, via the icon, protected the Lateran. Such a "field of signs" would not be unusual in a city like Rome, where religious celebrations and the election of a new pope were often celebrated with heraldic insignia, triumphal arches, and temporary constructions created on the façades of buildings in a liminal zone between public and private space.[30] With more permanent works, like the stone reliefs, the façade offered a space where the transitory processional activity could be embedded into daily experience.[31] Seeing images at key points along a route would call to mind particular aspects of the religious experience and could also offer models for behavior: candles flanking the representation referencing

Figure 4.6 "Taberna della Sposata," insignia of the Confraternity of the Salvatore, Rome. Photo: Kirstin Noreen.

the icon demonstrated the perpetual devotion to Christ, while the often anonymous kneeling figures provided a model of veneration for viewers to follow.

Notably, these relief images most frequently focus on the face of Christ and offer only an abbreviated reference to the icon cover. Damage to the Lateran Christ makes it difficult to assess the appearance of the original image beneath the cover, but other icons—especially those created in the twelfth century—give some sense of Christ's representation.

Christ likely appeared enthroned, holding a text in one hand and blessing with the other, as can be seen in the early twelfth-century portrayal in the cathedral of Tivoli and the late twelfth-/early thirteenth-century version in the cathedral of Sutri. It is not surprising that these representations had an important connection with the Lateran image, because the Tivoli and Sutri icons were part of a widespread campaign in the region surrounding Rome to replicate the popular August Assumption celebration; the images that participated in those processions reproduced the Lateran Christ and the icon of Santa Maria Maggiore to reinforce a symbolic connection between Rome and towns like Tivoli, Sutri, Viterbo, Vetralla, and Trevignano.[32] The Lateran icon's role as a communal symbol and its power as a protector of the people made it a particularly charged model for other communities desiring similar civic well-being.

Such images raise the more general question of the role of icon copies in the Middle Ages and the power that those copies could retain. It is not surprising that miraculously created icons, like that in the Lateran or that in Santa Maria Maggiore, would be reproduced, for they were believed to be accurate representations of the physiognomy of the Virgin and Christ. Notably, however, the copies created are often not "exact" in the modern sense of the term, in part, perhaps, because of the difficulty in accessing the original and in part because of changing stylistic priorities; instead, the copies reproduce the most distinctive aspects of the prototype.[33] Nonetheless, these copies could be treated as originals if they were modeled after a miraculous prototype. This process is also apparent in the portrayal of the *Madonna avvocata*, a particularly popular representation in medieval Rome that represented the Virgin as the advocate of the Roman people with her hands outstretched towards an unseen Christ.[34] This type, based on a sixth-century original known as the Madonna of San Sisto (fig. 4.5), generated multiple copies that often competed with one another, and, in the end, obscured the ritual significance of the original.[35]

Another competition of holy images may have inspired the thirteenth-century addition of the metal revetment on the Lateran icon; this cover essentially transformed the enthroned image of Christ into a disembodied head that created a visual parallel with two other miraculous representations in Rome: a bust of Christ that was believed

to have appeared at the time of the initial consecration of the Basilica of San Giovanni in the Lateran and the Veronica. A legend, portrayed in a fourteenth-century fresco located in the *confessio* of San Giovanni, illustrates that the face of Christ appeared as Pope Sylvester consecrated the high altar; this miraculous representation helped to confirm the primacy of San Giovanni as the Savior's basilica.[36] Across town, at St. Peter's in the Vatican, Innocent III also promoted the cult of the Veronica, a cloth with the remains of the imprint of Christ's face—believed to be a true image, or *vera icon*.[37] This sudarium was named after the woman, Veronica, who wiped Christ's sweaty brow as he carried the cross on the road to Calvary. These three representations made the face of Christ an image of devotion associated with the city of Rome itself, as is apparent on pilgrims' badges.[38]

I hope to have shown that the Lateran icon had a great historical, ritual, and religious significance for the Roman people. The themes that I selected to discuss—the presentation, movement, and copying of the icon—are ones that can be applied far outside the context of medieval Rome. I would like to conclude by examining how those same themes can relate to a holy image that has a stronger religious reverberation in the United States and has a particularly significant following in Los Angeles. I am referring to the Virgin of Guadalupe, also known as Our Lady of Guadalupe, an image that, like the Lateran icon, was formed through miraculous means.[39] A publication by the preacher Miguel Sánchez in 1648 describes the legend of the miraculous appearances of the Virgin to an Indian named Juan Diego.[40] On December 9, 1531, as Juan Diego passed the hill of Guadalupe found north of Mexico City, he experienced the first of four visions of a young woman who claimed to be the Virgin Mary. The woman requested that Juan Diego go to the bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, and ask that he construct a chapel to honor her at Tepeyac. Although Juan Diego was initially refused a meeting with Zumárraga, upon the urging of the Virgin who appeared in a second vision, he returned to convey his message to the skeptical bishop. Zumárraga told Juan Diego that he would need to bring proof of his visions of the Virgin. During Juan Diego's third encounter with the Virgin, she told him to gather flowers in his cloak; finding blooming flowers in an otherwise inhospitable terrain, Juan Diego followed the Virgin's instructions and placed the flowers in his cloak, or *tilma*. When

Juan Diego returned to the bishop and opened his *tilma*, an image of the Virgin that had been miraculously imprinted on the cloak was revealed. This image became the focus of great devotion and was eventually placed in a newly constructed chapel honoring the Virgin at Tepeyac.

Sánchez's text clarifies some of the characteristics associated with the Virgin of Guadalupe, a representation that was "copied from God's original."[41] Created when "her Blessed image had remained imprinted on the cloth," this miraculous representation reconfirmed its authenticity through the excellent preservation of the *tilma*.[42] Unlike other paintings, the "carefully unified composition" of the *tilma* image demonstrated that it was "painted without a brush, painted without a canvas, the canvas having no threads."[43] The physical qualities of the image underscored that the Virgin of Guadalupe had derived from an "original image of Heaven"—the Virgin herself;[44] in some illustrations of the Guadalupe legend, God is represented as the painter of the image.[45] The unique quality of the *tilma* and God's intervention in the creation of its image further reinforced the value of the cloth as a relic.

Copies of the Virgin of Guadalupe share in the prototype's power—helping to spread the authority of the original in Mexico City and confirming its legitimacy through their own, sometimes miraculous, associations. With the ease of mechanical reproduction and the vast proliferation of copies of the Virgin of Guadalupe, questions have been raised related to the commercialization of the image. A concern about diminishing the significance of the original is perhaps not that surprising when one notes the numerous copies found in murals, on cowboy boots, on purses, in tattoos, to name only a few locations.

I would like to single out one of these copies that has had particular significance for Los Angeles, a reproduction known as the *Peregrina*, or "Pilgrim," that is now typically housed in the church of St. Marcellinus in the City of Commerce, California (fig. 4.7).[46] The *Peregrina* is "an exact digital reproduction of the original in Mexico City, which has been blessed and touched to the original image";[47] as an authentic copy, the image at St. Marcellinus is distinguished from other representations that reproduce the Virgin of Guadalupe and thus enjoys a special status in celebrations in Southern California. The *Peregrina*, along with an image of St. Juan Diego, was brought to Los Angeles on December 1, 2006, by the rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico

Figure 4.7 *Peregrina*, digital copy of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Church of St. Marcellinus, Commerce, California. Photo: Kirstin Noreen.

City, Monsignor Diego Monroy Ponce, as part of the celebration of the 75th annual procession dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe in Los Angeles and also the 475th anniversary of the original appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe.[48] Signatures of Monsignor Diego Monroy and Norberto Cardenal Rivera Carrera, the archbishop of Mexico City, authenticated the two representations as faithful copies—as "true" images.

The *Peregrina* has an active existence in Southern California. A special committee facilitates receiving and granting visitation requests for the *Peregrina* image—the copy often visits hospitals, jails, and local parishes. A volunteer who helped to facilitate a visit to an Oxnard parish summarized the role of the *Peregrina*: "The people who get to see the image say, 'Our Lady comes to us when we can't come to her.'"[49] By far, the most important activity of the reproduction occurs in conjunction with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. Prior to the procession along Cesar Chavez Avenue and a special annual mass that take place on the first Sunday of Advent, the image visits numerous parishes where the representation "comes alive for the people."[50] The selection of a diverse and multicultural group of parishes reflects the unifying quality of the original image. Returning to East Los Angeles, the *Peregrina* participates in an elaborate one-mile procession that includes Aztec dancers, equestrian groups, mariachi, and decorated cars and floats that frequently transport *tableaux vivants* of costumed figures who reenact the story of the miraculous apparition in front of reproductions of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe (fig. 4.8).[51] This celebration is, without a doubt, the most venerable and important religious procession in the city of Los Angeles, typically attracting around 25,000 participants.[52] On December 2, 2012, the celebration marked the eighty-first anniversary of the archdiocese's annual procession in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe. At that time, the representations of the *Peregrina* and the image of Juan Diego were transported at the end of the procession, the last to enter the East Los Angeles College Stadium where the annual mass was held. Once in the stadium, the images were set up, facing one another, in a further reenactment of the miraculous apparition of the original (fig. 4.9).

To come full circle back to the Lateran icon in Rome, one can see quite evidently how icons have served as catalysts to promote liturgical

Figure 4.8 Outdoor procession honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe. Los Angeles, December 2, 2012. Photo: Kirstin Noreen.

Figure 4.9 Outdoor procession honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe, detail of the *Peregrina* and the image of Juan Diego. Los Angeles, December 2, 2012. Photo: Kirstin Noreen.

participation. In both the Middle Ages and the present, icons move the people—serving as focal points for devotion and conduits for communication with the holy. Processional movement of icons engage with the urban fabric through routes that can be charged with meaning and an ordering of participants that can have not only religious but also political, social, and economic significance. Imagery associated with the procession or the caretakers of the icon can provide visual models for religious devotion. The practice of reproducing icons helps to distribute the power of the original—and its liturgical traditions—to other communities. Proper authentication of reproductions reinforces the power of the prototype, establishes the veracity of the copy, and maintains the relevance of the original for future generations.

NOTES

1. Many of the ideas reflected herein are further developed in the following: Kirstin Noreen, "Revealing the Sacred: The Icon of Christ in the Sancta Sanctorum, Rome," *Word and Image* 22 (2006): 228–37; Noreen, "Sacred Memory and Confraternal Space: The Insignia of the Confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore (Rome)," in *Roma Felix—Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, ed. Carol Neuman de Vegvar and Éamonn Ó Carragáin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 159–87; Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ in Late Medieval Rome: The Icon of Christ in the Sancta Sanctorum," *Gesta* 49, no. 2 (2010): 117–35; Noreen, "Serving Christ: The Assumption Procession in Sixteenth-Century Rome," in *Remembering the Middle Ages in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Lorenzo Pericolo and Jessica N. Richardson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 231–45; and Noreen, "Negotiating the Original: Copying the Virgin of Guadalupe," *Visual Resources* (published online January 26, 2017): 1–22.

2. For the processional use of the icon, see Giovanni Marangoni, *Istoria dell'antichissimo oratorio, o cappella di San Lorenzo nel Patriarchio Lateranense comunemente appellato Sancta Sanctorum* (Rome, 1747), 112–39; William Tronzo, "Apse Decoration, the Liturgy and the Perception of Art in Medieval Rome: S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Maggiore," in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: Functions, Forms and Regional Traditions*, ed. William Tronzo, Villa Spelman Colloquia (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1989), 1:167–93; Gerhard Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humaniora, 1990), 37ff.; Serena

Romano, "L'acheropita lateranense: Storia e funzione," in *Il Volto di Cristo*, ed. Giovanni Morello and Gerhard Wolf (Milan: Electa, 2000), 39–41; Enrico Parlato, "Le icone in processione," in *Arte e Iconografia a Roma dal tardoantico alla fine del medioevo*, ed. Maria Andaloro and Serena Romano (Milan: Jaca Book, 2002), 55–72. The procession was banned under Pius V (1566–72); see Richard Joseph Ingersoll, "The Ritual Use of Public Space in Renaissance Rome" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985), 250, 258n50–51; Barbara Wisch, "Keys to Success: Propriety and Promotion of Miraculous Images by Roman Confraternities," in *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2004), 167–69, 180; Barbara Wisch and Nerida Newbigin, *Acting on Faith: The Confraternity of the Gonfalone in Renaissance Rome* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2013), 166–67; Noreen, "Serving Christ."

3. See, for example, the *Liber Pontificalis* life of Pope Stephen II (752–57), which describes the processional use of the image in the context of the Lombard invasion of Rome: *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 2nd ed., ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955), 1:443.

4. Ernst von Dobschütz, ed., *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), 66, 136*–37*: 2d; Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 65.

5. Little is known about the daily celebrations in the Sancta Sanctorum, also known as the Oratory of San Lorenzo, but records indicate that the chapel often served as a staging point for the stational liturgy where the pope would gather with cardinals, chaplains, subdeacons, and cantors; see Sible de Blaauw, "Il Patriarchio, la basilica laternanense e la liturgia," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome: Antiquité* 116 (2004): 168. Bernhard Schimmelpfennig notes that there was likely a staff of chaplains or subdeacons who assisted in the papal chapel; see Schimmelpfennig, *The Papacy*, trans. James Sievert (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 161. Under Sixtus V (1585–90), the Scala Sancta, or Holy Stairs, were transferred to their current location, where they now lead to the Sancta Sanctorum.

6. The *Descriptio Lateranensis ecclesiae*, written around 1100, explains: *Et super hoc altare est imago Salvatoris mirabiliter depicta in quadam tabula, quam Lucas evangelista designavit, sed virtus Domini angelico perfecit officio*; as reproduced in *Codice topografico della Città di Roma*, ed. Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti (Rome: R. Istituto storico italiano per il medioevo, 1946), 3:357n13; for an English translation, see Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 311. For a discussion of the *Descriptio*, see Richard Krautheimer, Spencer Corbett, and Alfred K. Frazer,

eds., *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1977), 5:66–67; James M. Powell, "Honorius III's *Sermo in dedicatione ecclesie Lateranensis* and the Historical-Liturgical Traditions of the Lateran," *Archivium historiae pontificiae* 21 (1983): 195–209, esp. 200.

7. The *Liber Pontificalis* under the life of Pope Stephen II (752–57) refers to the image: *sacratissima imagine domini Dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi quae acheropsita nuncupatur* (443). For the role of the image as an *acheiropoietos/semi-acheiropoietos*, see Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, 64–68; Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 61–62, 321; Maria Andaloro, "L'acheropita in ombra del Laterano," in *Il Volto di Cristo*, ed. Giovanni Morello and Gerhard Wolf (Milan: Electa, 2000), 43–45; Nino Zchomelidse, "The Aura of the Numinous and Its Reproduction: Medieval Paintings of the Savior in Rome and Latium," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 55 (2010): 236–37.

8. Nicolaus Maniacutius, *De sacra imagine SS. Salvatoris in Palatio Lateranensi* (Rome, 1709), cap. 3, 8: *Legimus quosdam suorum charorum post obitum vix carere praesentia potuisse, et ne dolore nimio consternati insaniam, seu mortem incurrerent, in sui doloris solatium statuas eis similes fabricasse. . . . Et idcirco invenere remedium, volentes eum habere, ut poterant, in Imagine tali, quem secum jam habere non poterant praesentia corporali*. See also Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 500, text 4F, and Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 61–68, 321–25.

9. See Cesare Rasponi, *De basilica et patriarchio Lateranensi libri quattuor* (Rome, 1656), 369.

10. For a photograph of the uncovered icon, see Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ," fig. 7.

11. These silken veils would have dated to at least the pontificate of Alexander III (1159–81), as described by the early thirteenth-century English chronicler Gervase of Tilbury: *est et alia dominici vultus effigies in tabula aeque depicta, in oratorio S. Laurentii, in palatio Lateranensi, quam sanctae memoriae nostri temporis Papa Alexander III multiplici panno serico operuit, eo quod attentius intuentibus tremorem cum mortis periculo inferret. unumque procul dubio compertum habeo, quod si diligenter vultum dominicum, quem Judaeus in palatio Lateranensi iuxta oratorium S. Laurentii vulneravit, cuius vulnus cruore tanquam recente faciem dextram operuit, attendas, non absimile Veronicae basilicae S. Petri cive picturae, quae in ipso S. Laurentii est oratorio, vultuque Lucano reperies* (Gervasius of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, bk. 3 [1212–14], in *Christusbilder*, ed. Dobschütz, 292*–93*: 32). See also Marangoni, *Istoria dell'antichissimo oratorio*, 88; Josef Wilpert, "L'Acheropita ossia l'immagine del Salvatore nella Cappella del Sancta Sanctorum," *L'Arte* 10 (1907): 174; Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ," esp. 122–25; Zchomelidse, "The Aura of the Numinous," 226–32.

12. See Gervase of Tilbury in note 11. Gerald of Wales (ca. 1220) tells us: *Quam cum papa quidam, ut fertur, inspicere praesumpsisset, statim lumen oculorum amisit, et deinde cooperta fuit auro et argento tota praeter genu dextrum, a quo oleum indesinenter emanat*; from Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer (London, 1873), vol. 4, "Speculum Ecclesiae," cap. VI, 278. For these sources, see also Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 327–28, Q14 and Q15; Brenda Bolton, "Advertise the Message: Images in Rome at the Turn of the Twelfth Century," in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 119.

13. For a more detailed discussion of these objects, see Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ," esp. 128–29.

14. Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Donors in the Frames of Icons: Living in the Borders of Byzantine Art," *Gesta* 45 (2006): 195.

15. Leslie Brubaker, "Icons before Iconoclasm?," in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 45 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1998), 1216. For the relationship between the divine prototype and the painted image, see, for example, the texts of John of Damascus (second quarter of the eighth century) and St. Theodore the Studite (ninth century) as reproduced and discussed in Brubaker, "Byzantine Art in the Ninth Century: Theory, Practice, and Culture," *Modern Greek Studies* 13 (1989): 23–94, esp. 37, 65–68, and Gary Vikan, "Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium," *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989): 47–59, esp. 50–51.

16. Noreen, "Revealing the Sacred," 228–37.

17. Per Jonas Nordhagen has proposed that those lips would respond to the prayers of the pious; see Nordhagen, "Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 453–60, esp. 454, and Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representations in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 29–30. I would like to thank Rt. Rev. Protopresbyter Andriy Chirovsky, S.Th.D., for the suggestion that the gold may have been placed where the devotee would have kissed the icon.

18. Carlo Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere* (Rome: n.p., 1961), 71; Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, 29.

19. See also the discussion of the early twelfth-century icon of Christ in the cathedral of Tivoli and the findings of its recent restoration in Herbert L. Kessler, "The Acheropita Triptych in Tivoli," in *Immagine e ideologia: Studi in onore di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle*, ed. Arturo Calzona et al. (Milan: Electa, 2007), 117–25.

20. According to Francesca Persegati, who worked on the restoration of the icon conducted by the Vatican Museums, an exact date for the painted face of Christ cannot be determined with certainty; Noreen, "Re-Covering Christ," 122.

21. Herbert L. Kessler, "Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 136–37 and 237n120. For the reflective quality of gold, see Rico Franses, "When All That Is Gold Does Not Glitter: On the Strange History of Looking at Byzantine Art," in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Eastmond and Liz James (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 13–23, esp. 18. Metallic icon covers would have been cleaned with special soap, likely to enhance their reflective surface; see, for example, the description of the Santa Maria Maggiore icon in Wisch, "Keys to Success," 174.

22. There is extensive literature on the Assumption feast. See, for example, Filippo Caraffa, "La processione del SS. Salvatore a Roma e nel Lazio nella notte dell'Assunta," *Lunario Romano: Feste e cerimonie nella tradizione romana e laziale* 5 (1976): 127–51; Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 37–78; Herbert L. Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Enrico Parlato, "Le icone in processione," in *Arte e Iconografia a Roma dal tardoantico alla fine del medioevo*, ed. Maria Andaloro and Serena Romano (Milan: Jaca Book, 2002), 55–72; Serena Romano, "L'icône Acheropoietes du Latran: Fonction d'une image absente," in *Art, cérémonial et liturgie au Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque de 3e Cycle Romand de Lettres, Lausanne-Fribourg, 24–25 mars, 14–15 avril, 12–13 mai 2000*, ed. Nicolas Bock et al. (Rome: Viella, 2002), 301–20; Mario Cempanari, *Sancta Sanctorum Lateranense* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2003), 1:138–42; Enrico Parlato, "La storia 'postuma' della processione dell'acheropita e gli affreschi seicenteschi della confraternita del Salvatore *ad Sancta Sanctorum*." *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 15 (2007): 327–55; Noreen, "Sacred Memory," 159–87; Noreen, "Serving Christ."

23. Noreen, "Serving Christ."

24. According to Canon Benedict (ca. 1143) in the *Liber Censum*, as cited and translated in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 72 and 500, doc. 4E. An earlier source from the time of Otto III (Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 499, doc. 4D) indicates that, while at the small church of the Virgin, "the whole choir of men and women kneel before it [the Lateran icon], praying together one hundred kyrie eleisons and shedding tears." Belting further suggests (73) that the Marian icon of San Sisto may have also taken part in the procession.

25. For the most complete discussion of this icon, see Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*.

26. As described in a document of the Confraternity of the SS. Salvatore from 1462; see the translated text in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 500–501, 4G.

27. Maniacutius, *De sacra imagine SS. Salvatoris*, as translated in Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 500, text 4F.

28. Comparisons can be drawn with the papal *possesso*, a procession through the city of Rome that followed the election of a new pope. For additional information on the papal *possesso*, see Ingersoll, "Ritual Use of Public Space," 171–223; Noreen, "Sacred Memory," 173.

29. Noreen, "Sacred Memory," 159–87.

30. For this interaction between public and private space in Rome, see Alan Ceen, "The Quartiere de' Banchi: Urban Planning in Rome in the First Half of the Cinquecento" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977), esp. 109–71; Ingersoll, "Ritual Use of Public Space," esp. 224–58; Charles Burroughs, *From Signs to Design: Environmental Process and Reform in Early Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990); Borroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Noreen, "Sacred Memory," 159–87.

31. Processional activities and icons could also be referenced in representations within the ecclesiastical interior. See, for example, the mosaic of Santa Maria in Trastevere as discussed by Ernst Kitzinger, "A Virgin's Face: Antiquarianism in Twelfth-Century Art," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 6–19, and William Tronzo, "Apse Decoration, the Liturgy and the Perception of Art in Medieval Rome: S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Maggiore," in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: Functions, Forms and Regional Traditions*, ed. William Tronzo, Villa Spelman Colloquia (Bologna: Villa Spelman Colloquia, 1989), 1:167–93.

32. For a further discussion of these icons and the replication of the Assumption celebration in Lazio, see Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, "Il Cristo di Sutri e la venerazione del SS. Salvatore nel Lazio," *Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia: Rendiconti* 17 (1940–41): 97–126; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 323–29; Tronzo, "Apse Decoration," 177–78; Gail Solberg, "The Madonna *Avvocata* Icon at Orte and Geography," in *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Andrew Ladis and Shelley E. Zuraw (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 2001), 123–34; Zchomelidse, "The Aura of the Numinous," 221–63. Rebekah Perry deals in depth with the processions and icons of Lazio; see Perry, "Sacred Image, Civic Spectacle, and

Ritual Space: Tivoli's *Inchinata* Procession and Icons in Urban Liturgical Theater in Late Medieval Italy" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2011).

33. For a broader discussion of icon copies, see Vikan, "Ruminations on Edible Icons," 47–59; Gordana Babić, "Il modello e la replica nell'arte bizantina delle icone," *Arte Cristiana* 76 (1988): 61–78.

34. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 314–20.

35. Ibid., 320–23; for the dating of the original image, see 315.

36. The primacy was reconfirmed in the joint dedication of the church: to John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, and Christ. A copy of the *confessio* image and a discussion of the miracle can be found in Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 110–12, fig. 88. For the watercolor copy of the fresco, see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 4423, fol. 5r, and Stephan Waetzoldt, *Die Kopien des 17. Jahrhunderts nach Wandmalereien in Rom* (Vienna: Schroll-Verlag, 1964), 37, fig. 99. The fresco has been attributed to the time of Urban V's restoration of the altar in 1369–70; see Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et decor: Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994), 1:241–42.

37. Gerhard Wolf has written most extensively on the Veronica image; see Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 80–87; Wolf, "La Veronica e la tradizione romana di icone," in *Il Ritratto e la Memoria: Materiali*, ed. Augusto Gentile, Philippe Morel, and Claudia Cieri Via (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1993), 2:9–35; Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the 'Disembodied' Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West," in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, ed. Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf, Villa Spelman Colloquia 6 (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998), 153–79; Wolf, "La vedova di Re Abgar: Uno sguardo comparatistico al Mandilion e alla Veronica," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 69 (1999): 215–43; Wolf, "Christ in His Beauty and Pain: Concepts of Body and Image in an Age of Transition (Late Middle Ages and Renaissance)," in *The Art of Interpreting*, ed. Susan C. Scott (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 164–97; Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel: Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2002). See also Flora Lewis, "The Veronica: Image, Legend and the Viewer," in *England in the Thirteenth Century. Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Dover, NH: Boydell, 1986), 100–106; Bolton, "Advertise the Message," 117–30; Christoph Egger, "Papst Innocenz III. und die Veronica: Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Seelsorge," in Kessler and Wolf, *Holy Face*, 181–203. Significantly, there is no record of an image on the sudarium prior to a French

chronicle in 1191; see Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica," 167; Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 327, Q13.

38. *Romei & Giubilei: Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro*, ed. Mario d'Onofrio (Milan: Electa, 1999), 342 (figs. 104, 105), 343 (figs. 106, 107), 344 (figs. 108, 109), 345 (fig. 110), 346 (figs. 112, 113), 347 (fig. 114).

39. The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is currently contained in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City in a display that facilitates mass devotion. For a more in-depth discussion of the Virgin of Guadalupe, its replication, and the role of digital copies, see Noreen, "Negotiating the Original."

40. Miguel Sánchez, *Image of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Guadalupe. Miraculously Appeared in the City of Mexico. Celebrated in her History, with the prophecy of Chapter Twelve of the Apocalypse* (1648). For a reproduction of the Spanish text (*Imagen de la Virgen, Madre de Dios de Guadalupe*), see Ernesto de la Torre Villar and Ramiro Navarro de Anda, *Testimonios históricos Guadalupanos* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 152–281. There is extensive literature dealing with the origins and veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe; see, for example, Michael E. Engh, "Companion of the Immigrants: Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe among Mexicans in the Los Angeles Area, 1900–1940," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 5 (1997): 37–47; D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix. Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to "Blade Runner" (1492–2019)*, trans. Heather MacLean (Durham, NH: Duke University Press, 2001), esp. 96–160; Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Creating the Virgin of Guadalupe: The Cloth, the Artist, and Sources in Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 571–610; Peterson, *Visualizing Guadalupe: From Black Madonna to Queen of the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

41. See Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 118–32, for an analysis of Sánchez's *Imagen de la Virgen, Madre de Dios de Guadalupe* (1648) and a discussion of the early interpretations of the Virgin of Guadalupe. For this quote, see Torre Villar and Navarro de Anda, *Testimonios*, 164, as cited and discussed in Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 127.

42. See Sánchez's *Imagen de la Virgen*, as reprinted in Torre Villar and Navarro de Anda, *Testimonios*, 228, as cited and discussed Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 129.

43. Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero, *Escudo de armas de México* (Mexico City: Viuda de don J. B. de Hogal, 1746), 311, as cited in Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 129.

44. Sánchez, *Imagen de la Virgen*, 158, as cited and discussed Gruzinski, *Images at War*, 127.

45. See, for example, Joaquín Villegas' eighteenth-century image of *God the Father Painting Our Lady of Guadalupe* (Museo Nacional del Arte, Mexico City); reproduced in Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, fig. 16.

46. The image was transferred to St. Marcellinus in June 2009. I would like to thank Humberto Ramos, parish life director at St. Marcellinus, for information on this copy.

47. For the quote and additional information, see the archdiocese press release that describes the annual procession on December 3, 2006 (press release dated November 9, 2006: "Cardinal Mahony and Thousands of Catholics to Celebrate 475th Anniversary of the Appearances of the Virgin of Guadalupe at 75th Annual Procession on Dec. 3"). I am grateful to Carolina Guevara, chief communication officer for the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, for sharing with me press releases and media advisories related to the *Peregrina*.

48. Upon their arrival, the two images were greeted by the 2006 Guadalupe Procession Committee of the archdiocese of Los Angeles and were welcomed and blessed by Aztec dancers during a special ceremony. See the Media Advisory from the archdiocese of Los Angeles from November 30, 2006 ("'La Peregrina,' the Pilgrim Image of the Virgin of Guadalupe from Mexico City to Arrive in Los Angeles Tomorrow, Dec. 1"). The image of Juan Diego is also currently housed in the church of St. Marcellinus in the City of Commerce.

49. Mark Storer, "Santa Paula, Oxnard Parishes Host Our Lady of Guadalupe Image," *Ventura County Star*, November 3, 2011, http://archive.vcstar.com/lifestyle/santa-paula-oxnard-parishes-host-our-lady-of-guadalupe-image-ep-364262034-352249261.html (accessed February 20, 2017).

50. According to Humberto Ramos (as recorded in a discussion on October 9, 2012).

51. The procession currently begins at the La Soledad church and culminates with a mass at the East Los Angeles College Stadium.

52. As indicated at http://www.guadalupecelebration.com/gc/en/media/announcement.html (accessed January 3, 2013). The *tilma* relic additionally attracts great devotion, as clearly indicated during the "Guadalupe Celebration" at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on August 5, 2012; that gathering, with 130,000 ticket requests and an actual attendance of more than 70,000 faithful, was "one of the largest Catholic events in Los Angeles in a generation"; see http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Sacred-Lady

-of-Guadalupe-Relic-to-Be-Featured-in-Landmark-Celebration-164344096.html (accessed December 3, 2012); media advisory of the archdiocese of Los Angeles, August 31, 2012: http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/media/Press%20Releases/2012-0831_Tilma_Relic_Chapel_Dedication.pdf (accessed December 3, 2012). Quote is from Andrew Walther, vice president for communications at the Knights of Columbus, an organization that helped to cosponsor the event; see http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Sacred-Lady-of-Guadalupe-Relic-to-Be-Featured-in-Landmark-Celebration-164344096.html (accessed December 3, 2012).

CHAPTER FIVE

Sacred Art in Armenia

Exterior Sculpted Reliefs

CHRISTINA MARANCI

This study addresses the relationship between art and ritual in early medieval Armenia, focusing on a single sculpted relief.[1] I will consider its iconographical meaning and offer for it a possible liturgical scenario. This case raises broader questions about the sacrality of exterior bas-reliefs of Armenia, their potential ritual use, and their relationship with the surrounding landscape. I conclude with a call to help preserve a church that speaks eloquently to the relationship between art and liturgy and is now in grave danger.

The regions of historic Armenia, today divided among multiple independent states, preserve more than seventy monuments from the sixth and seventh centuries.[2] Of these, twelve bear exterior figural sculpture. On the south façade of the church of Ptłni, located in the province of Kotayk‘ in the Republic of Armenia, is a window molding featuring Christ, angels, apostles, and hunters (fig. 5.1). At the triconch chapel of Pemzašēn, the visitor enters through a portal sculpted with the Virgin and Child (fig. 5.2). At the domed basilica of Ōǰun, Christ appears above a window, flanked by angels (fig. 5.3). Sacred images

Figure 5.1 Church of Ptłni, Armenian Republic, detail of south façade window. Photo: Christina Maranci.

Figure 5.2 Church of Pemzašēn, Armenian Republic, detail of west portal. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.3 Church of Ōǰun, Armenian Republic, window detail. Photo: Christina Maranci.

also appear on carved stone stelai, which often stand close to church buildings, as at Ōǰun (fig. 5.4) or T'alin.[3]

This material is important because we know little about contemporary pictorial arts of the region. Only fragments remain of the wall paintings that once adorned church interiors.[4] The realm of Armenian manuscript illumination does not provide much more to go on: only four folios, now sewn into a tenth-century manuscript, can be dated to the pre-Arab period.[5] Portable objects, such as metalwork, are not known to survive in abundance either, but one is always hopeful for new discoveries.[6]

The bas-reliefs of early medieval Armenia and of Georgia have been carefully studied, and a rich literature on them has emerged.[7] These sculptural forms, often in low relief, typically adorn windows, portals, and other zones on the exterior façades of the monuments. They include vegetal motifs, cross forms, and numerous figural scenes. In many cases, scholars have concerned themselves with iconographic sources and interpretation; some have sought to identify regional carving styles. What is perhaps surprising is that the liturgical function of reliefs, or the possibility of their worship, has attracted less attention. One important example to this observation, however, is offered in the

Figure 5.4 Church of Ǒǰun, stele monument, detail. Photo: Christina Maranci.

publications of Thomas F. Mathews.[8] Mathews has considered, in recent work, the evidence for Armenian icons in both textual sources and in sculpture, raising new and important questions about the relationship between art and devotion in early medieval Armenia.

Inspired by this new direction of research, I seek here to understand the experience of the worshipper in relation to early medieval Armenian art and to ask what happens when we bring together the liturgical sources with the bas-reliefs. In service to this goal, I will focus on the Armenophone tradition, the material to which I have closest access, to the exclusion of the rich relief sculpture from neighboring Georgia. The answers that emerge must be speculative, but the questions themselves suggest new ways of thinking about long-studied imagery and, indeed, about the tradition of exterior bas-relief production itself.

THE CHURCH OF MREN AND THE LITURGICAL IMAGE

The seventh-century church of Mren is located in what is now eastern Turkey in a military zone next to the closed Armenian border (fig. 5.5).[9] Mren is known to historians of Byzantium and Armenia: dating to circa 638, its epigraphy attests to interactions between Emperor Heraclius and the Armenian nobility, and to the imperial goal of consolidating the eastern frontier against Persian attack.[10] Mren is also an impressive representative of what is called the "golden age" of Armenian architecture—its large size, attenuated proportions, and refined pier and vault treatments all speak to a coherent aesthetic that probably inspired the nearby cathedral of Ani of circa 989 (figs. 5.6 and 5.7). Mren is additionally famous for its sculpted reliefs, two of which deserve special mention. On the west façade, below the inscription naming Heraclius, is a sculpted portal: two large archangels appear in a tympanum above a horizontal lintel containing Christ, saints Peter and Paul, a cleric, and two nobles (fig. 5.8). On the north façade is a portal with a lintel bearing images of a horse, a tree, three human figures, and a central cross (fig. 5.9). The lintel is, at present, unsupported and unsecured on its left side.

Each of the forms on the lintel is fairly easy to discern, but the meaning of their combination has sustained decades of debate. Many of the earliest theories associated the lintel with a princely scene, making

Figure 5.5 Church of Mren, exterior. Photo: Christina Maranci.

particular reference to the presence of the horse.[11] In 1966, Minas Sargsyan suggested that it depicts a church foundation, enacted by the cleric and nobles named and portrayed on the west portal.[12] In 1971, and more fully in 1997, Nicole Thierry notes a series of problems with Sargsyan's argument and proposed instead that the scene represents the return of the cross to Jerusalem by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in 630.[13] Noting the invocation of the "victorious [bareyałt'oł] King Heraclius" on the west portal inscription, Thierry identifies the emperor in the left-hand figure on the lintel, honoring a cross intended to symbolize the relic. The larger censing figure at right represents in her view Modestos, bishop of Jerusalem, who received the relic from Heraclius. This interpretation has attracted the attention and support of many Armenologists and Byzantinists, and I have recently adduced more evidence for this argument in the form of two early medieval Latin accounts of the "Return of the Cross" that offer a textual explanation for the unusual representation of Heraclius without crown or diadem, and dismounted.[14]

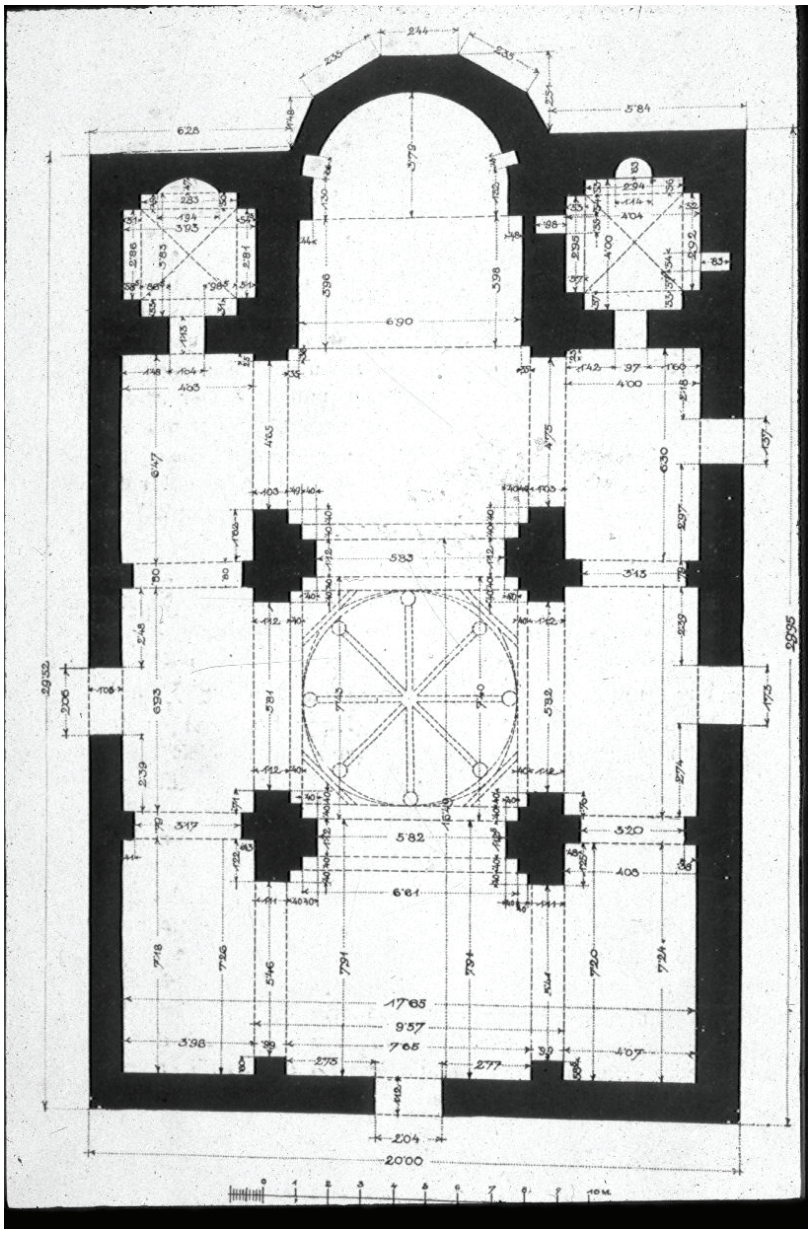

Figure 5.6 Church of Mren, plan. T'oros T'oramanyan, ca. 1918.

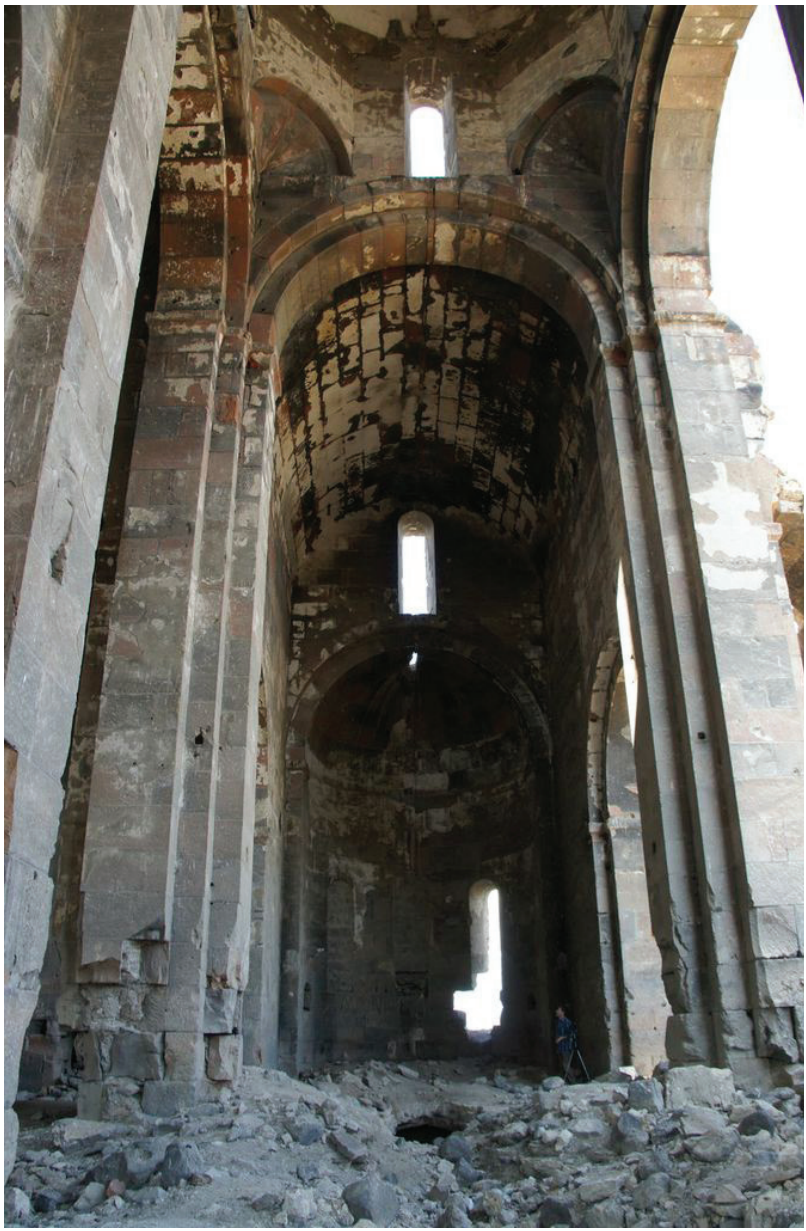

Figure 5.7 Church of Mren, interior. Photo: Christina Maranci.

Figure 5.8 Mren, west façade tympanum. Photo: Christina Maranci.

Figure 5.9 Mren, north façade portal lintel. Photo: Christina Maranci.

Yet this identification does not account fully for the iconography of the north lintel at Mren and, more particularly, the strong ritual character of the scene.[15] The large incense burner, at the backswing of its movement, is a type well known from contemporary Byzantine examples in bronze. The composition focuses our attention on the central cross, which is addressed by all the figures. With decorative listels at the corners of each arm, the cross bears the morphology of late antique examples from Byzantium and Armenia, known both from metalwork and from pictorial representation.[16] These features led Thierry to regard the scene at Mren as an "imaginative and reduced" image of the Return of the Cross by Heraclius, one which fused the historical event with ritual meaning.[17] Thierry notes in this regard the great many feasts associated with the cross in the Armenian liturgy. The rite of exaltation was celebrated in Armenia on September 14, as in Byzantium, and likewise involved the elevation and censing of the cross. In addition to Good Friday and May 7, commemorating Helena's discovery, the cross formed the focus of ritual throughout the liturgical year. In this sense, one can hardly imagine a moment in which the subject matter of the north lintel at Mren would have been inappropriate.[18]

A recent study of the Armenian rite of church dedication invites us further to meditate on the liturgical imagery of the lintel and its potential ritual use. Father Daniel Findikyan has collated three early textual accounts of this rite: a *maštoc'*, or "ritual," probably of the late ninth century, and two allegorical commentaries on the consecration rite, both dating to the first half of the eighth century, one by Yovhannēs Ōjnec'i and the other attributed to Step'anos Siwnec'i.[19] The *maštoc'* and the commentaries offer fertile ground for the interpretation of the north portal lintel at Mren, but it is first important to say that their use requires caution. The inherent difference between an abstract representation of organized movement and a specific physical setting hamper any straightforward application of the texts to the monument. Nor can we be sure that the rites, as preserved in the texts collated by Findikyan, existed at the time of the construction of Mren (ca. 638). Yet in my view these texts have the capacity to illuminate our interpretation of the architectural evidence. As early, if not contemporary, documentation for the experience of the church building, they allow us to imagine the kinetic, visual, aural, and olfactory dimensions of worship and offer

precious insight into the symbolic meanings of the church, as evoked through prayer, movement, and hymns.[20]

The dedication rite described in the liturgical texts cited above is of particular relevance to Mren because it involves the church façades. All three of the texts attest to withdrawal from the building and the performance of exterior services equipped with a cross. First, the altar table is carried out of the church as the congregation gathers around it singing psalms, after which the altar table is reinstalled within the church and elevated to the bema. The next exterior unit is the "Naming of the Church" and the blessing of the exterior walls. At this point, the clergy and congregation depart the monument, and the bishop declares in whose name it has been erected. This latter directive, presumably, would have indicated the identity of the holy person to whom the church was to be dedicated, but the text is vague on this point. Following this declaration, the bishop and worshippers make a circuit around the church. The allegorical commentary attributed to Step'anos Siwnec'i further mentions the "tracing the Lord with the cross" on the exterior and the anointment of the four sides of the building.

All three texts invoke imagery of the Heavenly Jerusalem. After the altar is removed to the outside of the church, the procession of reentry is accompanied by Psalms 119–21.[21] (Psalm 119: "In my distress I cry to the Lord"; Psalm 120: "I lifted up my eyes to the hills, from whence my help comes"; and Psalm 121: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!") Findikyan notes that Yovhannēs Ōǰnec'i refers to these three psalms as "gradual psalms" (*salmosk' astijanac'*) and suggests that this may reflect the general belief that they were sung by pilgrims climbing Mount Zion to the temple.[22] The concept of ascent, he continues, is illustrated in the "crescendo from abject despair, through acknowledgement of God as protector to rejoicing for having arrived at Jerusalem."[23]

For a worshipper approaching the north portal at Mren, the imagery of the psalmody would have been particularly germane (fig. 5.10). Singing the first-person lines, "I lifted up my eyes to the hills, from whence my help comes," the participants' gaze would have traveled from the altar stone, removed from the church interior, to the portal, where it would be met by the central cross, supplicants, and the magnificent

Figure 5.10 Mren, north façade portal. Photo: Christina Maranci.

sculpted tree on its mound. As the words were sung, the visitor's eyes would, truly, be "lifted" to the scene on the portal. Although we cannot be sure that this rite was performed at Mren, it is nevertheless instructive that at an early date in the formation of the Armenian liturgy, a procession into the church was understood in terms of entry into Jerusalem.

The northern position of the portal also holds special significance in this context. Of the lateral sides of the church in early medieval Armenian architecture, the south façade, rather than north, was typically preferred for access and epigraphy.[24] By contrast, at Mren, moving south through the north portal oriented the spectator not only toward the sacred space of the church but also, at least symbolically, toward Jerusalem.[25] This axis of approach could have evoked the arrivals of Christ, and later Heraclius, to the holy city. Such a procession would also have followed the southward progress of the Heraclian campaigns of 627–28, which descended via the Axurean river valley, quite near Mren, into Persian territory: an operation whose success led ultimately led to the surrender of the holy relics to the Byzantines.[26] The north portal may thus have recalled, at once, memories of recent military campaigns, of the imperial *adventus*, and of the sacred narratives of the Holy Land. The city gate, although absent in the bas-relief, may be understood as the architectural threshold. Indeed, the medieval church portal has long been understood as a *topos* for the gates to the Holy City, but the north portal at Mren, particularly when read together with the Armenian liturgy of dedication, presents an early and forceful expression of this concept.

BROADER QUESTIONS

The rite of dedication, with its exterior elements, offers a basis on which to revisit many features of Armenian architecture and sculpture, including the paved porticoes, the exterior apses, and, more generally, the strong exteriority of the monuments, which present to the visitor a powerful sense of geometric coherence. The dedication rite also allows us to consider the performative possibilities of the long foundation in-

scriptions that sometimes extend across multiple façades of Armenian churches.[27] Exterior bas-reliefs, too, can be rethought in this light, not just as designed walls but as active components of the experience of ritual or worship.

A potentially fertile monument for this kind of study is the celebrated church of Ałt'amar, circa 915, which formed part of the palace complex of the Armenian king Gagik Arcruni in the region of Vaspurakan (now eastern Turkey). The exuberant relief decoration cladding each of the four façades has rightfully earned the attention of scholars for decades, and Ałt'amar is now the most widely published monument of Armenian architecture, with no fewer than five English-language monographs to its name.[28] But the careful studies undertaken therein focus largely on the sources of the images rather than their relations to ritual. I would suggest, though, that visual analysis of the façades invites further questions. What are the implications, for example, of halting a narrative of Old Testament scenes in an exterior niche on the southern façade of the monument in order to show Christ enthroned and the Virgin and Child, placed at ninety-degree angles to each other (fig. 5.11)? This holy space, it could be argued, directs the viewer to stop and meditate on the figures, not only because of their frontality and their visual frames, but also because the visitor must here pause and turn in order to proceed around the building.

Another question regards the relationship between these exterior reliefs and the sculpted stelai (tall, rectangular upright stones) that are so often placed in their proximity. Sacred imagery at Ōǰun, for example, appears both on the wall exterior and on twin stelai just to the north (fig. 5.12). These stelai bear images of saints, Old Testament subjects, and episodes from the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. In order to view these images, the visitor mounts a tall flight of stone steps at the west. At T'alin, stelai rise from the ground between two seventh-century churches (fig. 5.13). They are carved with sacred scenes, most commonly of the Virgin and Child, and they seem to have been located within close reach of the visitor: in some cases original stepped podia survive. As such, they offered the opportunity for worship outdoors, but within the sacred precinct of the church. The stelai occasion a scholarly opportunity to pose the kinds of phenomenological

Figure 5.11 Ałt'amar (modern eastern Turkey). Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.12 Ōǰun, stele monument. Photo: Christina Maranci.

questions that have been recently asked of Byzantine icons.[29] In this case, where worship can be envisioned out of doors, one might explore the role of the sun in highlighting certain carved reliefs at various times of day, or the role of seasons and weather (on the high plateau that means hot summers, harsh winters) in shaping the visitor's experience of the images.

Figure 5.13 T'alin, Armenian Republic, stele. Photo: Christina Maranci.

In medieval Armenia, the outdoor bas-relief takes on particular power for its relationship with a sacred Christian landscape (fig. 5.14). The plain of Ayrarat plays a key role in conversion narrative as described in the fifth-century account of Agat'angełos.[30] In a famous passage describing the descent of the Lord (from which the name "Ējmiacin" is traditionally derived), the patron saint of Armenia has a vision

Figure 5.14 The Monastery of Xor Virap, with Mount Ararat in the background. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

of a man with a golden hammer flying down from the sky, who strikes the ground, so that "the whole earth as far as the eye could see was struck level as a plain."[31] Later in the account, the newly converted King Trdat, eager to assist with the construction of churches, climbs to the top of Mount Ararat to quarry massive stones that he carries on his own back to the building sites.[32] These accounts may fruitfully inform notions of architectural interior and exterior in the early medieval Armenian world, and they suggest ways in which the visitor might have experienced the sculpted imagery on façades or stelai, not as elements distanced from the sanctuary of the apse, but as features in a sacred geography, rising from a plain flattened by the impact of a divine hammer, and in the shadow of the quarry from which were made the first Christian churches of Armenia.

There are many more directions for study, and many more questions to be asked. The commentary on the hours of the Divine Office by Step'anos Siwnec'i offers an allegorical interpretation of the liturgical day and of the passage of sunlight.[33] How might we rethink the experience of the church walls together with this text, remembering, too,

Figure 5.15 Aghtʻamar, detail of Christ. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

the vertical sundials preserved already from the seventh century?[34] How might Christology, and particularly concepts of mixed and unmixed natures, have been informed, inflected, or evoked by the materiality of the bas-reliefs? At Ałtʻamar, one cannot fail to notice that the sculpted images, whether or not they were painted, are composed of solid stone pieces joined together—and this seamed surface would have confronted the medieval spectator as he or she meditated upon the sacred portrait (fig. 5.15). The relationship between the physical reality of the images and contemporary theology, which has been fruitfully explored in relation to the Byzantine icon, has yet to be considered in relation to the Armenian sculptural corpus.[35] All of these questions require interdisciplinary work, and one hopes that the research will also take into account the Georgian material. As reluctant as I am

Figure 5.16 Mren from the southwest. Photo: Christina Maranci.

to engage in competing nationalist narratives with regard to early medieval culture, I am equally loath to presume a pan-Caucasian phenomenon based solely on visual similitude, irrespective of differences in belief, literary tradition, and culture.[36]

PRESERVING MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN ART

The most pressing question of all is how to preserve such a fragile tradition. At Zuart'noc', in the Armenian Republic, fragments of the façade now lie on the ground, exposed to weather, lichen, and damp. At the church of Djvari in Mc'xeta, Georgia, the wall reliefs are weathering faster than they can be protected. The case of Mren is the most urgent, because the isolation of this church, and its unstabilized condition, mean that the north façade, and its portal, may soon go the way of the south façade (fig. 5.16). Tied to the fate of the monuments they adorn, and exposed to the elements, the carved bas-reliefs discussed

above require not only the attention of the scholar but also the care of the preservationist, and one hopes they will receive both.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank Nicholas Denysenko and all those who took part in the conference on Sacred Images and Icons at the Huffington Ecumenical Institute (Loyola Marymount University) in February 2013. I am particularly grateful to those who listened and responded to the talk upon which this study is based. All errors are my own.

2. Any effort towards a precise count is of course fraught—various numbers can be derived depending on the size of the territory considered, the ways in which the monuments are dated, the decision to include monuments known only from literary sources, and the states of renovation. My number is based in part on the catalogue, focusing on the Armenian monuments, of Patrick Donabédian, who suggests that between 630 and 690, "leur nombre pourrait s'élever à une soixantaine pour ces six décennies"; see Donabédian, *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne* (Marseille: Parenthèsis, 2008), 275. When we add to this number monuments attributed to the sixth century, the number grows to above seventy.

3. For discussion and bibliography of these monuments, see most recently Donabédian, *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne*, note 2.

4. Ibid., 220–23. To this corpus of wall painting, we may now add some new fresco fragments at Mren, which I discovered in June 2013. See Christina Maranci, "New Observations on the Fresco Program at Mren," *Revue des etudes arméniennes* 35 (2013): 203–25.

5. See Thomas F. Mathews, "The Early Armenian Iconographic Program of the Ēǰmiacin Gospel (Erevan, Matenadaran MS 2374, olim 229)," in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. Thomas Mathews, Nina Garsoïan, and Robert Thomson (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), 119–215.

6. Now see Timothy Greenwood and Noël Adams, "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Silver," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69 (2015): 115–58.

7. See Donabédian, *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne*, for the Armenian material. The Georgian bas-reliefs are discussed in Adriano Alpago-Novello, *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut supérieur d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art, Collège Érasme, 1980).

8. See, for example, Thomas Mathews, "Vrtʻanēs Kʻertʻoł and the Early Theology of Images," *Revue des etudes arméniennes* 31 (2008–2009): 101–26.

9. See, most recently, Donabédian, *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne*, 108–10; Jean-Michel Thierry and Nicole Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mren et sa decoration," *Cahiers archéologiques* 21 (1971): 43–77, and, most recently, Samvel Karapetyan, "Mrenə ev Nra Hušarjannerə" ["Mren and Its Monuments"], *Vardskʻ/Duty of Soul* 7 (2012): 31–63.

10. See *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, 2 vols., trans. Robert Thomson, with historical commentary by James Howard-Johnston and assistance by Tim Greenwood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

11. See, for example, Josef Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1918), 427–28.

12. M.S. Sargsyan, "Mreni Tačarə Himnaderneri Patkerakʻandaknerə" ["The Images of Founders on the Church of Mren"], *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 35, no. 4 (1966): 241.

13. See Thierry and Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mren et sa decoration," and Nicole Thierry, "Héraclius et la vraie croix en Arménie," in *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. Jean-Pierre Mahé and Robert W. Thomson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 165–86.

14. Christina Maranci, "The Humble Heraclius: Revisiting the North Portal at Mren," *Revue des études arméniennes* 31 (2009): 359–72. See also Stephan Borgehammar, "Heraclius Learns Humility: Two Early Latin Accounts Composed for the Celebration of Exaltatio Crucis," *Millennium: Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.* 6 (2009): 161–63.

15. Unlike, for example, the eleventh-century *Sacramentary of Mont-Saint-Michel* (New York: Pierpont Morgan, MS 641, fol. 155v), in which the story is told in two registers of continuous narrative, the lintel presents a composition centered on the cross.

16. See *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, ed. Susan A. Boyd and Marlia Mundell Mango (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993). For Armenian crosses, see *Armenia Sacra*: *Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IVe–XVIIIe siècles)*, ed. Jannic Durand, Ioanna Rapti, and Dorota Giovannoni (Paris: Musée de Louvre Éditions, 2007).

17. One might add that the proposed liturgification of the Return of the Cross may be seen as in keeping with contemporary Heraclian ideology. See John Haldon, "The Reign of Heraclius: A Context for Change?," in *The Reign of Heraclius: Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 14–15.

18. Early historical writing also attests to the central role of the cross in ceremonies of the foundation of a church. The *History of the Caucasian Albanians* preserves an account of consecration, mostly likely dating from the seventh century, which also features a cross: "Taking the cross of light, [Prince Juanšēr] put it to rest in the house he had built for it, and there he knelt down and with bitter contrition and tears he prayed to the Creator of all things; see *History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Daskhurants'i*, trans. and comm. Charles J. F. Dowsett (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 121.

19. Daniel Findikyan, "The Armenian Liturgy of Dedicating a Church: A Textual and Comparative Analysis of Three Early Sources," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 64, no. 1 (1998): 75–121.

20. Consideration of the multisensory experience of the Byzantine church interior has emerged in recent decades. See, for example, Liz James, "Senses and Sensibility in Byzantium," *Art History*, 27, no. 4 (2004): 522–37, and Bissera Pentcheva, "Hagia Sophia and the Multisensory Experience," *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93–111.

21. Daniel Findikyan, "The Armenian Liturgy of Dedicating a Church: A Textual and Comparative Analysis of Three Early Sources," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 64, no. 1 (1998): 91–93.

22. Ibid., 90.

23. Ibid.

24. See Timothy Greenwood, "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 36.

25. Given the off-axis orientation of Mren, however, direct southward travel would actually bring one to the Persian Gulf.

26. See Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 90.

27. See Greenwood, "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions," 27–91.

28. Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *Aght'amar: Church of the Holy Cross* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Step'an Mnac'akanyan, *Aght'amar*, English trans. Krikor H. Maksoudian (Saddle Brook, NJ: Armenian General Benevolent Union, 1986); John G. Davies, *Medieval Armenian Art and Architecture: The Church of the Holy Cross, Aghtamar* (London: Pindar, 1991); Lynn Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium: Aght'amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

29. Bissera Pentcheva, "The Performative Icon," *The Art Bulletin* 88, no. 4 (2006): 631–55.

30. *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians*, trans. and comm. Robert W. Thomson (Albany: SUNY Press, 1976).

31. Ibid., 277 (§735) and 283–85 (§743).

32. Ibid., 307 (§767).

33. Michael Daniel Findikyan, *The Commentary on the Armenian Daily Office by Bishop Step'anos Siwnec'i ([died] 735): Critical Edition and Translation with Textual and Liturgical Analysis* (Rome: Pontificio istituto orientale, 2004).

34. Christina Maranci, "Sundials and Medieval Armenian Architecture," *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Kevork B. Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 553–70.

35. See Pentcheva, "The Performative Icon," note 29.

36. Such cross-regional work is an obvious desideratum. Yet unlike drawing formal parallels between the two traditions, cross-contextual work demands linguistic proficiency in the ancient languages of both Armenian and Georgian. Liturgists point the way forward: see, for example, Gabriele Winkler, *Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte des armenischen Symbolums: Ein Vergleich mit dem syrischen und griechischen Formelgut unter Einbezug der relevanten georgischen und äthiopischen Quellen*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 262 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2000); Winkler, "Anhang zur Untersuchung 'Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte des armenischen Symbolums' und seine Bedeutung für die Wirkungsgeschichte der antiochenischen Synoden von 324/325 und 341–345," in *The Formation of a Millennial Tradition: 1700 Years of Armenian Christian Witness (301–2001)*, ed. Robert F. Taft, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 271 (Rome, 2004): 107–59; Winkler, "Über die Bedeutung einiger liturgischer Begriffe im georgischen Lektionar und Iadgari sowie im armenischen Ritus," *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 4 (2000): 133–54; and Vitalijs Permjakovs, "'Make This the Place Where Your Glory Dwells': Origins and Evolution of the Byzantine Rite for the Consecration of a Church" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2012), which considers the Armenian and Georgian rites of dedication.

CHAPTER SIX

From Trent to Tierra del Fuego

DORIAN LLYWELYN, S.J.

The small south Chilean port of Punta Arenas on the Magellan Straits is the home of the Santuario de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno. This modern church houses a *Jesús Nazareno*, a copy of an eighteenth-century Spanish statue of the suffering Jesus, the original of which is to be found 1,500 miles north of Punta Arenas, on the island of Caguach, part of the remote archipelago of Chiloé that lies off the Pacific coast of Chile. The Santuario is located on a windy hilltop on the edge of the city in an area of low-quality housing. As in many other parts of Chile, the city of Punta Arenas has a population of largely European origin. However, most of the devotees of the image, and many of the inhabitants of Barrio 18 de septiembre, are Chilotes—first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants to the Magellan Straits region, whose family roots, more distantly or less so, lie in Chiloé. Traditionally, this has been a somewhat marginalized community: their ethnic heritage is notably mestizo, and in common parlance in Chile, *chilote* has been something of a byword for "bumpkin." It is not unknown for Chilotes to hide their own identity out of a desire to blend into the economically successful and aspirational society of today's Chile.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Many strands of history, both secular and religious, are woven into the skein of devotion to *Jesús Nazareno* and its link to the Chilotes of Punta Arenas. During the colonial period, the Spanish crown maintained only a minor military presence on the islands of Chiloé. Even after the establishment of the republic in 1827, the archipelago and its inhabitants remained an almost forgotten outpost of the country. In the natural cycles of fishing and agriculture, timeless social habits continued: life on the islands even today is a rich social fabric that involves shared work and communally organized celebrations, with a notable emphasis on hospitality and festive meals. Distance from the concerns of the metropolis has allowed a perpetuation of ideas and practices that have disappeared elsewhere in Chile. Ricardo Cardenas, director of the Chiloé archives at the National Library of Chile, describes it as "a distinct enclave, linked more to the sea than the continent, a fragile society with a strong sense of solidarity and a deep territorial attachment."[1]

In 1608, Jesuit missionaries arrived on Chiloé, setting up a system of circulating missions. Images of Christ, Mary, and the saints had been an essential part of evangelization in the Spanish Empire from its very beginnings. The arrival of the Jesuits coincided with the period of Tridentine reform. In Latin America as in other places, the Church fostered a culture of devotionalism in which "images served as an important bridge to the power and blessings of divine presence."[2] The religious soil of Chiloé gave that devotional spirituality its own local form, expressed especially in a tradition of woodcarving and more than thirty wooden churches of Baroque inspiration.

Following the suppression of the Jesuits in 1767, the Chiloé missions were taken over by the Franciscans, who brought with them from Spain *Jesús Nazareno*, a statue of the suffering Jesus of the *via crucis*. The church on the small island of Caguach is the home of this image, which is at the center of the most important religious feast of the whole archipelago, so much so that Caguach is frequently referred to as "la isla de la devoción." Very similar images are found throughout former Spanish imperial territories. Deriving from the religious imaginary of late medieval and early modern Spain and expressing and emphasizing the

real physical humanity of Jesus, they elicit, as David Morgan notes, "*compassio*, an empathetic identification with the suffering Christ."[3] Many are dark-skinned: in the case of some, Jesus has already fallen to the ground and kneels under the weight of the cross, while others portray him as carrying the cross, or as standing and vested in a purple robe, crowned with thorns, and bleeding, his face a mask of pain and fear.

In 1776, the priest Hilario Martínez brought the inhabitants of five continuously warring islands together to organize a feast in honor of the *Jesús Nazareno* statue. There was no agreement about who would host the feast, and thus a concomitant risk of breaking the tense and fragile peace. To decide the issue, Martínez chose the unusual method of proposing a canoe race. The winners were to have the statue permanently in their island church, with the agreement that the other communities would share the financial responsibility for holding an annual feast in honor of the image. Rowers from the small island of Caguach being victorious, Caguach gained the statue and the epithet "la isla de la devoción," and the statue became known as *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach*. Every year since then, at the beginning of the last week of August each year, residents of the five islands begin the historical labor of coming together to prepare for the feast.

The social organization of the feast has remained unaltered since colonial times. The *Cabildo* ("Chapter"), a highly hierarchical lay institution created by the Franciscans, strictly controls all activities. The celebration lasts several days, and it includes a reenactment of the canoe race and a flag-waving dance, whose original meaning has been lost to time but which may be a stylized portrayal of the interinsular skirmishes. Two days before the feast proper, a small maritime procession brings over to the island other ancient statues, each of which is zealously curated by its own *Cabildo* and accompanied by its devotees. On the morning of August 30, boats arrive at Caguach bringing thousands of pilgrims from all the islands and beyond. They come to fulfill promises or to make prayer requests. August is early spring, and during the sowing season, Chilote farmers pray to *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* for propitious weather and healthy livestock: "We come to our Divine Jesús of Nazareth because this is something that comes to us from our elders," said one pilgrim. "If we don't, we will get bad harvests."[4]

Each year the statue is dressed in a new robe. The previous year's robe is cut up and pieces of it are distributed and tussled over, being highly prized as devotional talismans. Then after the main mass, and accompanied by the statues from the other islands, *Jesús Nazareno* is taken out of the church and processed along the esplanade of the island to the accompaniment of traditional music and songs. A large feast and a lively market also make this religious feast the most important social gathering of the year by far for the islanders.

THE CATHOLIC ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE THEOLOGY OF IMAGE

The persistence of the devotion to *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach* should not be taken as a given. William Taylor notes a widely shared and perduring conviction in colonial Latin America that such images "could come alive with the sacred."[5] Throughout the colonial period and beyond, this unofficial religious instinct engendered a perpetual clerical anxiety about idolatry.

At the same time the statue was brought to Caguach and the annual feast established, European Catholic intellectuals were calling for "a move away from the cult of the saints and of pilgrimages and for the discouragement of superstitious religious practices."[6] The nineteenth-century Chilean Catholic Church undertook a vigorous reform of Church life. This endeavor was a local, if late, outcropping of the Catholic Enlightenment, that international movement that sought, inter alia, to "make Christianity . . . more reasonable and useful to society, and . . . [which] naturally translated into an opposition to or suppression of the excesses of baroque Catholicism." [7] Generations of Chilean bishops came from patrician families of Spanish descent, and they were often educated in ultramontanist mold in Rome. By social origin and religious formation alike, therefore, they were not inclined to particularistic, rural devotions. Sensitive to secular accusations of Catholic primitivism and irrationality in religion, and familiar with European Catholic doubts about Latin American idiosyncrasies, the bishops sought to purge the Church of liturgical immoderation.[8] They hoped to

bring their dioceses into the mainstream of Catholic civilization and to claim for Chilean Catholicism a respectable place at the table.[9]

Precolonial Chile, unlike the Andean regions, had never been home to a large and powerful polity and did not have a rich material culture. By the mid-nineteenth century, the republic's indigenous cultures were weakening relentlessly. These factors made extirpating pre-Columbian or superstitious elements from public religiosity comparatively easy. But in remote and thinly populated areas, especially where there were stronger mestizo or indigenous populations, an earthier piety survived the liturgical bowdlerization. The cult of *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach* never seems in fact to have encountered significant ecclesiastical censure. The prayers, pilgrimages, and feasts of Caguach were simply an organic and indelible part of life there, so much so that they seemed to merit neither reform nor suppression.

CHILOÉ IN EXILE AND THE THEOLOGY OF IMAGE

In the nineteenth century, the government in Santiago began a project of economic expansion into the far south of the country. Chilotes became the mainstay of the immense and highly successful livestock and fishing enterprises that were established in the vast expanses of Patagonia. Chilote emigration continued throughout the twentieth century. Periodic failures of the potato crop, the devastating 1960 earthquake and tsunami, and the development of the oil industry all led to new waves of settlement in Patagonia in the 1950s and 60s. The harshness of life made leaving the ancestral homeland in search of a better life a foregone conclusion for many. Today's Chiloé is home to about 150,000 inhabitants, but there are twice as many Chilotes on the mainland.

The devotion to the statue of *Jesús Nazareno* was central to the faith-life of Chiloé. In Patagonia, however, this expression of faith seems to have been largely ignored by the Salesians who had been running the windblown and icy tip of South America as their mission territory since 1879. In exile, both devotion and feast dwindled into memory, becoming at the most a small domestic cult with no communal or public expression.

To what do we ascribe what looks like the accidental—if not deliberate—ecclesiastical exclusion of popular piety? First, we cannot ignore the influence of social and class attitudes towards the folk piety of immigrants from a rural, underdeveloped area. The first Salesians were Italians and had brought with them their own devotions. Their Chilean successors were alumni from the elite Salesian high schools in Santiago and other cities. Neither group would have been likely to champion the religiosity of poor immigrants from a region regarded as backwards. Second come ecclesiological factors: the nineteenth-century Church championed popular religiosity as a bulwark against the attacks of secularist intellectual elite, fostering devotions in order to "bolster an ultramontane Catholicism that sought to equate the universality of the church with a standard discipline that came from Rome."[10] Not all devotions, however, had the same value. Universal devotions with dogmatic and papal aspects, such as Lourdes, were given greater prominence. Veneration of *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno de Caguach* was simply too local and obscure to achieve widespread notice. A third reason is practical and economical. The Salesians' mission territory was vast and thinly populated. In ethnicity or language, Chilotes were not sufficiently distinct to seem to merit a dedicated mission. Chilotes were, moreover, engaged on the ranches and in the fishing fleet: they simply did not have the social or economic wherewithal to gather in the diaspora. And *Jesús Nazareno of Caguach* was still *in* Caguach—there was in Punta Arenas no copy of the statue to which they could offer their prayers, kiss, touch, dress, or celebrate in procession. A fourth possible influence was the *Ilustración Católica*, the local manifestation of the Catholic Enlightenment, with its distaste for devotions to images, religious practices that smacked rather too much of the irrationalities of the past rather than the aspirations of the present or the future.

Behind all those more immediate factors, however, perhaps lies a fifth, theological reason—one that is chronologically and geographically more distant but is no less potent for that. In response to the accusations of Catholic iconolatry coming from the polemics of the Protestant reform, the fathers of the Council of Trent had taught that images of Christ, Mary, and the saints should be used as moral mnemonics or to focus piety. Images were to be revered "not because some divinity of

power is believed to lie in them . . . or because anything is to be expected from them; but rather, because the honor showed to them is referred to the originals which they represent; thus, through the images which we kiss and before which we go down on our knees . . . we give adoration to Christ and veneration to the saints, whose likeness they bear."[11]

Folded into Trent's language is a vast corpus of discourse on images—forged originally in the Iconoclastic crises of the eighth- and ninth-century Byzantine Empire, it draws on Greek philosophical thought and scripture. The iconodule theology of both East and West is neatly summed up in the phrase of St. Basil that is found in the Byzantine-rite vespers for the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the feast that commemorates the restoration of the practice of venerating icons in 842: "Honor shown to the icon passes to the prototype." In similar vein, St. Dionysius of Fourna writes in his *Painter's Manual*: "We . . . represent the image of the Virgin and of all the saints, indirectly according worship to them, not to the image itself; we do not say that this really is Christ."[12] Such iconodule analyses are of course apologias, challenging iconoclast accusations that the use of imagery in worship *necessarily* involves idolatry.

Such apologias as those of Trent seek to calm theological anxieties about the connection between spirit and matter. Paradoxically, however, these statements may also end up highlighting the inconsistencies between the neatness of dogma and the unwieldy ambiguities of devotional practice. Orthodox icons are frequently described, especially in popular religious writings, as "windows into heaven,"[13] a concept that suggests *mutual* perception and communicability. Trent, in contrast, seems to conceive of venerating images exclusively as a one-way process. In Trent's theology of image, statues such as *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach* would be channels through which humans present themselves to the divine; yet the divine would be present in them only at a psychological level, in the mind and heart of devotees. Trent's nervous exactitude notwithstanding, such ratiocinations do not necessarily apply neatly in popular piety. Devotions to images easily express an ambiguous theology, charged with a visceral, volatile affectivity, in which the boundaries between "direct" and "indirect" worship are porous. In an essay on Marian devotion, Robert Orsi notes that im-

ages of Mary "fuse image and prototype . . . responses to them are 'predicated that what is represented on an image is actually present, or present in it.'[14] . . . Encounters with images of the Virgin are encounters with her presence. . . . Devotional space is constituted by the presence of the Madonna and her devout to each other, by the desires of the devout and by Mary's invitation to them to come to her and her recognition of their needs."[15]

In the Catholic world, many devotions involving particular images express similar dynamics. The physical reality of the image that is used in prayer is to its devotees more than an inanimate object.[16] Statues that are the center of a historical and widespread popular devotion, such as Guatemala's *Cristo Negro de Esquipulas*, are held to be something considerably more than channels of prayer directed heavenward. They are also, and probably more importantly, held to be containers of transcendent presence that comes to earth in a specific time, place, and object. In his seminal study of Byzantine aesthetics and iconology, Otto Demus explains that a religious image is not a mere external and extrinsic reproduction of its original. Rather, "the Prototype produces its image . . . as a shadow is cast by a material object. . . . *This process of emanation imparts to the image something of the sanctity of the archetype*: the image is *identical* [to its prototype] according to meaning. . . . The picture, if created *in the right manner* is a *magical* counterpart of the prototype, and has a *magical identity* with it."[17] Demus's comments give metaphysical expression to the instinct of devotees that *Jesús Nazareno* can indeed guarantee good harvests: the statue participates in the apotropaic identity and powers of its prototype, Jesus. His words also, incidentally, make understandable a perennial clerical anxiety concerning images.

To insist on a radical disjuncture between whether meaning and presence are merely and subjectively ascribed to such objects or whether such presence is really and objectively present there is to miss the point. Holy images are the point of engagement in a relationship between the human and the divine, the temporal and the spiritual, the concrete and the universal. As such, they partake in both realities. In Catholic theology, such realities are called sacramentals, the noun signaling that they belong—if at a lesser level of intensity—to the same dispensation as the seven sacraments. It is worth noting, however, that devotion to an object

such as the *tilma* of St. Juan Diego, venerated at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, shows every sign of being, at least for some its devotees, functionally more important than the sacraments.[18]

I would also like to suggest—albeit tentatively—that the three-dimensional materiality of the statue suggests a different intensity and kind of presence from that of the Orthodox icon. The two-dimensionality of the panel icon reminds the viewer that its third dimension is interior, spiritual. This inner dimensionality suggests that when the divine comes into contact with the human, it does so in a spiritual way. In contrast, the three-dimensional statue is physically and earthily present, and it impinges into the world in a way that the two-dimensional icon does not. The fact that *Jesús Nazareno* images are often life-size communicates a fleshly immediacy: they are multidimensional presences that can be touched, dressed, kissed, and carried in ways that are physically even more involving of devotees than in the case of venerating icons. These too are of course venerated with kisses and touch, and the offering of incense and candles; they are also washed with holy water, decorated and taken in procession and pilgrimage, and *proskynesis* is done before them by the faithful. Yet they do not occupy physical space to the same degree. One more particular element of distinction pertains to *Jesús Nazareno* statues. The mestizo complexions of Chilotes can mark them out as being socially distinct from—and historically of a lower status than—Chileans with a greater proportion of European ancestry. The dark skin of the Spanish statue makes the humanity of Jesus immediate to Chilotes. Whether the statue's coloring is original or the result of centuries of burning of candles, this Jesus is "ours," the "Nuestro Padre" of the Chilotes in a culturally specific and intimate way.

With all this, one might hold, therefore, that the potential dangers of "direct" worship arise more easily in the case of statues than in the case of icons, especially in the case of naturalistic carvings such as the *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach*. In contrast, the spiritually stylized forms of Orthodox iconography in Russian, Greek, Ethiopian, and other traditions point out the difference between divine prototype and earthly image. Equally, it could be argued that the very physicality and naturalism of such statues engages the devotee in a more material, direct way. Such engagement, depending on one's theology, may be a good thing—or not.

TRANSLOCATIVE DEVOTION

As we have seen, according to the classical image theory espoused by both East and West, there exists a theological relationship between heavenly original and earthly image, between prototype and type: at some ontological level an image of a saint is connected in the *scala naturae* with what it represents. Yet a relationship of consubstantiality exists not only between the spiritual reality and its physical representation. Many images, such as the Punta Arenas statue, are also copies of earthly prototypes. They too share in the same economy of being as their originals, including at times the apotropaic and thaumaturgic qualities attributed to the originals.[19]

As exiles, emigrants, and travelers of all sorts, we invariably take with us reminders of our homeland. Reproducing renowned religious objects or making facsimiles of original sacred spaces in new contexts are practices so familiar that they hardly merit comment. Christian liturgical practice and the Church's liturgical calendar, in fact, in the ritual evocation of salvific events that happened in one place and one time, depend on such "re-production" at a performative level. Ritual and sacrament translate salvific events that happened in one place and one time into all places and all times. What is important to notice is that this re-production and re-presentation express encounters and relationships.

Miami's Shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre, patroness of Cuba, contains a modern copy of an original statue much venerated in the historical homeland. Thomas Tweed's study of this church and the many Cuban exiles who worship there employs the category of "translocative" piety: the shrine is more than an exercise in nostalgia or a location for remembering. Rather, the very presence of the modern statue, by dint of the fact that it *is* a copy of the original, storied statue, renders possible a real connection between the exile and the homeland in all its web of relations, territory, landscape, society, and culture. It is the lynchpin or the point of encounter in a vital relationship that compresses time and space.

The Santuario de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno in Punta Arenas is also a modern development, and the statue a modern copy of a

venerable original. The Punta Arenas statue and shrine translocatively shares in and communicates something of the whole world that is centered on the *Jesús Nazareno* statue in Caguach: the relationship is not only between the individual devotee and the image or just between present diasporic location and place of origin.

The historic social institution of the Punta Arenas *Cabildo* organizes the whole of the life of the shrine, replicating the social cohesion embodied in the Caguach *Cabildo.* At least at the level of affect, the Punta Arenas statue likewise evokes the whole warp and weft of life in Chiloé—fusing ancestral roots and new home. In the nonspecific Catholicism of the city, the shrine is a sacrament of Chiloé, and among first-, second-, and third-generation Chilotes, it is the focus of the perpetuation and celebration of their ancestral culture and their collective existence as Chilotes. Sensitive and careful pastoral work carried out by the rector, Fr. Miguel Velásquez, over four decades has made it the hub of a thriving community, a center for revitalization and education in a depressed and socially marginal barrio. The image is also central to the liturgical life of the church: when Fr. Velásquez preaches on the Gospels at Sunday Mass, he consciously refers not to "Jesús" but to "Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno," and points to the statue standing near the altar. Words and gesture, community regeneration and worship, then, evoke and link together multiple realities: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as related in the Gospels and the life of the inhabitants of Barrio 18 de septiembre; the person of Jesus and the statues that represent him; the treasured memories of community in Chiloé and its ongoing realization in the community that has grown up around the Santuario.

THE PROCESSIONS: LITURGICAL PILGRIMAGES AND CULTURAL STATEMENTS

Over the last thirty years or so, another stratum of translocative practice has been added to the multilayered reality of devotion, in the form of annual Jesús Nazareno processions in Punta Arenas. These processions are the high point of the community's shared ownership of the

devotion and have grown in size, elements, and complexity to become a major feature of the life of the city and the calendar of the diocese of Magallanes.

The practice of taking out cult statues from their shrines and processing them outdoors is of course a direct descendant of a medieval European practice and continues with great vigor, especially in the Spanish-speaking world (though not particularly so in Chile, because of the influence of the nineteenth-century reform). Theologically, it is worth reflecting on the nature of procession. If an image is connected with its prototype, then analogically the journey, the procession, or the pilgrimage of a statue along with its followers is connected with the journeys of its prototype, Jesus, and his disciples. As Jesus walked the hills and towns of Galilee, so *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach*, the "Man of Sorrows," traverses the city streets of Punta Arenas.

The Church's liturgical year is based on the seasons of the Northern Hemisphere. The August feast of Jesús Nazareno de Caguach is a spring festival: it expresses the rhythms of the pastoral and agricultural cycles that lie in the deep archetypes of the substrate of the Pascha—grace, as it were, building on nature. The procession thus looks backward in time to the original salvific events of the Passion, evokes Holy Week in the Church's calendar, and anticipates the eternal liturgy of heaven. Aleksander Gomola notes that "Christians of any era wishing to follow the principles of their religion have to identify on [a] constant basis with [a] specific geographical and historical reality from the past, making it present."[20] This identification is more than a psychological or intellectual juxtaposition of disparate times and places—it means that these times and places become interpenetrated with each other, so that one cannot be understood or experienced without necessarily invoking all the dimensions of the other.[21]

But there is also an another temporal and spatial dynamic at work: the Punta Arenas procession also mimetically reproduces and participates in the same journey that the original statue is making at the same time in faraway Caguach. Different orders of existence, different places, and different times are thus brought and welded together in the ritual of procession: first-century Palestine and the historical way of the cross, the annual cycle of devotional life in Chiloé, tied in as it is to the

bucolic natural rhythms of agriculture and fishing, and the grittiness of life in Barrio 18 de septiembre.

Such processions are broadly speaking liturgical pilgrimages. The 2007 *Aparecida Document*, the report of the Fifth General Assembly of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean describes in lyrical terms how

> the People of God can be recognized in their journey. There the believer celebrates the joy of feeling surrounded by myriad brothers and sisters, journeying together toward God who awaits them. Christ himself becomes pilgrim, and walks arisen among the poor. . . . The pilgrim's gaze rests on an image that symbolizes God's affection and closeness. Love pauses, contemplates mystery, and enjoys it in silence. It is also moved, pouring out the full load of its pain and its dreams. . . . A living spiritual experience is compressed into a brief moment. In it, pilgrims undergo the experience of a mystery that goes beyond them, the transcendence not only of God, but also of the Church, which transcends their family and their neighborhood.[22]

Liturgical processions inevitably make claims on the streets they pass. *Jesús Nazareno* is only one statue, yet as representation of a fallen, suffering Christ, it is a synecdoche that evokes the whole of Holy Week. T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* famously ends: "Wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has given his blood for the blood of Christ, / There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not depart from it / Though armies trample over it, though sightseers come with guide-books looking over it; / . . . From such ground springs that which forever renews the earth / though it is forever denied."[23] With the taking out of the statue from the Santuario the events of the Passion become actualized, re-presented, at the very least in the minds and hearts of those who take part in the procession, thereby suggesting in the mundane and apparently secular streets the immanent presence of the divine. In a process of consecration-by-contact, the streets along which the procession passes participate in the reality of the first *via crucis*, making Patagonia into Palestine, Punta Arenas into Jerusalem, and vice versa.

For the population of Barrio 18 de septiembre who turn out in large numbers to accompany their *Nuestro Padre Jesús* down from the Santuario and into the streets of the center of the city, the annual procession is at the simplest level an act of devotion. Nevertheless, such collective expressions of religious faith ineluctably have political resonances too. I have heard middle-class non-Chilote inhabitants of Punta Arenas refer to the religious life of the shrine as *religiosidad popular*, or "lower-class religion." In Spanish, this is not necessarily a pejorative expression, but it still suggests strongly a distance from the normative center. To that extent, the presence of the statue, accompanied by its flag-wavers, accordionists, and drummers, its *Cabildo* and its devotees, turns Punta Arenas into liminal space which is "characterized by the dislocation of established structures (and) the reversal of hierarchies."[24] In reality, then, the annual processions are not only "religion" in a narrow sense, but they are equally also an expression of pride in the presence of a community and its piety, a claim to acknowledgment and a voice in the life and self-image of the diocese, the city, and the region.

The matrix of history, geography, culture, and faith that are gathered together in the cult of Jesús Nazareno in Patagonia continues to evolve and to take on new meanings in new times and contexts. For much of the twentieth century, the border between Chile and Argentina in south Patagonia was bitterly contested, and during the 1970s and 80s the two countries were at the brink of war. Yet migrant Chilote communities have historically inhabited both sides of the border. As we noted above, the origin of the cult in the Chilote archipelago involved reconciliation between warring islands. Over the last twenty years—and largely inspired by the Punta Arenas shrine—the devotion to Jesús Nazareno has spread to or been revived in other places in the region. Moreover, transnational pilgrimages that involve taking *Jesús Nazareno* statues and their devotees from Chilean Patagonia to meet their counterparts in Argentinian Patagonia and vice versa have become important expressions of international friendship. Like the week of the feast in Caguach that they invoke and make real in a new way, these new pilgrimages bring together in one devotion people of different geographical origins, expressing a unity in faith, community, and

culture that is more important than the ambitions of the politicians of far-distant Santiago and Buenos Aires.

CONCLUSION

What might North American Christians think about in connection with this brief history of a comparatively minor shrine in a very distant location? Three things come to mind.

First is *the power of imagery to move hearts in a way different from lexical intelligibility*. Wendy Wright notes how religious images may, inter alia, "order time and space, create a coherent world, structure individual and communal identity, reinforce beliefs, expand the imagination, console and challenge, embody forms of the divine, allow communion with the divine, influence thought and behavior, and serve as boundaries or disrupt fixed boundaries or perceptions."[25] They may also, I would argue, be both the source and the object of theology. The *Jesús Nazareno* statues and their cult express a gutsy, active, and comprehensive *theologia prima*, a category described by Robert Taft as "the faith expressed in the liturgical life of the Church," in modes which are "typological, metaphorical . . . redolent of Bible and prayer, more impressionistic than systematic, more suggestive than probative."[26] Such theology can be too easily dismissed, especially by academic theologians as "piety" or consigned to the corner marked "ethnic," "diversity," or "conservative." One lapidary phrase that carries a certain amount of truth is "American Catholics are very good Protestants." Educated Anglo Catholics in the United States, one might argue, are by virtue of our history and education, particularly prone to the preferential option for word over image, for clarity over ambiguity, and to the Enlightenment reductionism of faith to its ethical manifestation—tendencies that were enumerated in a now-classic article by Carl Dehne, S.J.[27] It seems reasonable to suggest that the "stripping of the altars" and the demise of the use of images and devotions that followed Vatican II in the United States had its own cultural, class, educational, and ethnic prejudices, just as much as did the South American *Ilustración Católica*. It is, I think, timely, appropriate, and intellectually responsible to respectfully question such epistemological assumptions and preferences. Not

the least of the imports of the ever-more dominant Latino presence in Catholicism in the United States is the pastoral and theological challenge of the resurgence of popular devotions, particular in connection with images. The *Aparecida Document* serves as a salient reminder that to downplay the importance of such devotional practice would be

> to forget the primacy of the action of the Spirit and God's free initiative of love. Popular piety contains and expresses a powerful sense of transcendence, a spontaneous ability to find support in God and a true experience of theological love. It is also an expression of supernatural wisdom, because the wisdom of love does not depend directly on the enlightenment of the mind, but on the internal action of grace. That is why we call it popular spirituality, that is, a Christian spirituality which . . . includes much of the bodily, the perceptible, the symbolic, and people's most concrete needs. It is a spirituality incarnated in the culture of the lowly, which is not thereby less spiritual, but is so in another manner.[28]

It behooves us North Americans to look again at such incarnated spirituality with eyes that attend to its context. Chilean theologian Diego Irarrázabal, responding to criticisms coming from North America that Latin American religiosity contains few images of the Risen Lord, argues that devotees of images of the Suffering Christ "come to those images asking for health, social and economic progress, personal, familiar, (and) communitarian well-being. That is, the images carrying symbols of death in fact communicate life! . . . The images of Christ summon and gather people, groups, crowds. In this reinvigorating context, personal and group faith develop."[29] The *Jesús Nazareno* statues—but especially the social activities they inspire—are indeed life-giving. Rather than merely presenting morose exaltations of suffering, they arise from and foster solidarity.

Second, we would do well to note *the mutually involving relationship between and among collective identity, devotions, images, and particularistic theologies*. Recent academic work has explored the reality of ethnic particularity in relation to what it is to be a disciple of Christ, in whom there is "neither Greek nor Jew."[30] Chilotes are Chileans and Catholics. But they are also *Chilote* Chileans and, even more, *Chilote* Catholics. Tied as

the statue and its cult are to Chilotes' sense of who they are, devotion to the statue of *Jesús Nazareno de Caguach*—perhaps even more in the diaspora than in its historical place of origin—enshrines a perennial tension: between the universal and the particular, the sacred and the secular, the divine and the human. This incarnational paradox lies at the heart of all belonging and all membership of the Church.

Third, we should consider *the mystery of images*. Putting the statue and its associated cult under the microscope to a certain degree, when done both respectfully and analytically, is a valid and necessary theological exercise. Theology, after all, at the same time as being grounded in faith is also an exercise of the faculty of reason. The insights of the secular sciences are of great import in helping understand and appreciate the rich layers of complexity that underlie what is, in terms of its scale and context, merely a small phenomenon in a distant, largely unfamiliar, and thinly populated part of the world. Yet neither phenomenological description nor theological investigation adequately map or capture the rich layers of meaning of the cult of Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno de Caguach. If it is true that, in the words of e e cummings, "birds sing sweeter than books tell how," then we might argue that religious images and devotion may sometimes speak more eloquently and theologically than words on a page. Statues and their communities of faith point to—and, importantly, participate in—realities that lie beyond the ability of words to express fully. *Jesús Nazareno* is at one level a piece of carved and painted wood, and the Patagonian Chilotes no more than a mostly unknown community who live at the very end of the inhabited earth. Yet that image and community also point to, and in their own ways participate in that ineffable reign that is beyond—and at the same time present in—all the realms of the world.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Larry Rohter, "For Some on Island, a Planned Project Is a Bridge Too Near," *New York Times*, August 3, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/03/world/americas/03chile.html?pagewanted=all, accessed September 27, 2013.

2. William B. Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images: Religious Life in Mexico before the Reforma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 56.

3. David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 63.

4. Luis Mancilla, "El Nazareno de Caguach," *Patagonia Insular*, February 23, 2008, http://patagoniainsular.blogspot.com/2008/02/el-nazareno-de-caguach.html. All translations from Spanish, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

5. Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images*, 57.

6. Ulrich L. Lehner, "What Is 'Catholic Enlightenment?'" *History Compass* 8, no. 2 (2010): 169–70.

7. Andrea J. Smidt, "Catholic Enlightenment in 18th-Century Spain," in *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 409. In the same volume, Lehner, "Introduction: The Many Faces of the Catholic Enlightenment," explains inter alia the composite and often contradictory nature of the phenomenon, in which we find, for example, strands of Jesuit intellectualism coexisting with Jansenism, and earlier Gallicanism in Spain finding its progeny in nineteenth-century Chilean ultramontanism.

8. Mario Góngora, "Aspectos de la Ilustración Católica en el Pensamiento y la Vida Eclesiástica Chilena," *Historia* 8 (1969): 43–73, notes the tension between the Chilean bishops and the religious orders as another factor of their hostility towards popular devotions.

9. Scott Eastman, *Preaching Spanish Nationalism across the Atlantic, 1759–1823* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), notes the complex intertwining of conceptions of Enlightenment patriotism, Catholicism, and liberal nationalism in Mexico. Without wishing to conflate the Chilean and Mexican experiences, I think it is fair to note that the broad program of reform of the Chilean prelates was also influenced by a combination of these three factors.

10. Mark R. Francis, C.S.V., "Liturgy and Popular Piety in a Historical Context," in *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 41.

11. Norman Tanner, ed. and trans., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:774.

12. Paul Hetherington, ed. and trans., *The Painter's Manual of Dionysius of Fourna* (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1990), 87.

13. The epithet seems to have been originated by Russian theologian Pavel Florensky (1882–1937) and is not without its critics.

14. Daniel Freeberg, *The Power of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 17–18.

15. Robert Orsi, "The Many Names of the Mother of God," in Melissa Katz, ed., *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts*, ed. Melissa Katz (New York: Oxford University Press; 2001), 4–5.

16. For a detailed explanation of iconodule and iconoclastic theologies, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), esp. chap. 6.

17. Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (London: Routledge, 1948), 6 (original emphases).

18. D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), details how some preachers in Mexico City during the Baroque period and later centuries went as far as identifying the famous *tilma* as a second Incarnation. By way of comparison in another context, Nicholas Denysenko, "An Appeal to Mary: An Analysis of Pussy Riot's Punk Performance in Moscow," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 3 (2013): 1061–92, highlights the relative degrees of importance that Russian Orthodox Christians afford to holy objects vis-à-vis receiving the sacraments.

19. One thinks, for example, of the famous Kursk Root icon, the original of which has been lost, but the wonder-working powers of which are now held to exist in its copy.

20. Aleksander Gomola, "Cognitive Mechanisms at Work and Their Perlocutionary Effect in Catholic Preaching: A Case Study," in *Texts and Minds*: *Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric*, ed. A. Kwiatkowska (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 292.

21. On the notion of interpenetration, see Dorian Llywelyn, *Sacred Place, Chosen People: Land and National Identity in Welsh Spirituality* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), chap. 5.

22. *Aparecida Document*, 259–60. English text from http://www.aecrc.org/documents/Aparecida-Concluding%20Document.pdf.

23. T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1964), 88.

24. Agnes Horvath, Bjørn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra, "Introduction: Liminality and Cultures of Change," *International Political Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (2009): 3.

25. Wendy M. Wright, "Introduction," *Journal of Religion and Society* (Supplement Series), *Religion and the Visual* (ed. Ronald A. Simpkins and Wendy M. Wright) 8 (2102): 1.

26. Robert Taft, S.J., "Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," in *Liturgical Renewal as a Way to Christian Unity*, ed. James F. Puglisi (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 211–12.

27. Dehne criticizes as "losers" the principles of the post–Vatican II liturgy, which include "dignity-serenity-moderation, lexical intelligibility, (and) discomfort with ritual unless it is rendered safe by verbalization, and—above all—variety," and he identifies these liturgical preferences as coming too often from "a ninth-grade classroom"; see Carl Dehne, S.J., "Roman Catholic Popular Devotions," *Worship* 49, no. 8 (1975): 448.

28. *Aparecida Document*, 263.

29. Diego Irarrázabal, "Religious Windows in the Latin-American Christology," *Ciberteología: Journal of Theology and Culture* 12 (July–August 2007): 11–12.

30. See Dorian Llywelyn, *Toward a Catholic Theology of Nationality* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010); Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and a host of studies on particular ethnic groups in their religious dimensions.

PART THREE

Pastoral Reflections

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sources of Inspiration for the Contemporary Iconographer

MICHAEL COUREY

As I reflected on the work of iconography, I was drawn back to my earliest recollection of icons in my personal spiritual formation. I remember vividly three murals that seemed larger than life that were painted on the walls of the church where I was baptized and attended during my childhood. One was of the Last Supper, on the right side of the church, the second, that of the Resurrection, on the left side of the church. The third was of the patron saint of the church, St. George, which adorned the choir loft. These memories go back to when I was a young child, before I could attend Sunday school, and before I could read. I remember gazing in awe at these images while seated with my grandparents. How powerful images are in our memories! Our mind records images and stores them for contemplation.

As I grew up I learned that my father, of blessed memory, had painted that very icon of St. George in the church choir loft soon after he graduated from the Cooper School of Art in Cleveland, Ohio. My father was a combat veteran who served in the U.S. Army from 1941 to 1945, lived through D-Day, and earned a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. The practice of artistic expression was therapeutic in healing his

memories from the horrors he experienced on the battlefield. When I was in elementary school I would accompany my father to his art studio where I learned many techniques from him that I still use today in my work as an artist and iconographer. These are some of the fondest memories I have of my childhood, and that studio experience formed and shaped me as an artist.

My journey in the visual arts continued as I majored in studio art in college, inspired by the icons in my home parish, and with my first apprenticeship in my father's art studio. This path continued to broaden for me as I was called to serve God in the priesthood. In seminary and in service as a Greek Orthodox priest I have had opportunities that have continued to open doors into the world of iconography for me. Based on my work as a painter and iconographer for thirty years, I have identified six wells of inspiration from which the contemporary iconographer may draw to quench the insatiable thirst that develops when one becomes a lifelong student of this sublime art. These wells are the following: (1) Holy Scripture, (2) holy tradition, (3) publications, (4) studio experience, (5) prayer and fasting, and (6) pilgrimage.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

The first and foremost source for all true spiritual inspiration for the Christian is the study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. The Psalmist exclaims: "Thou hast said, 'Seek ye my face.' My heart says to thee, 'Thy face, Lord, do I seek'" (Ps. 27:8, RSV). David's prayer is also a prophecy of the incarnation of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ. His incarnation made it possible for those who sought the Lord to see his face in the flesh. Jesus said to his disciple Philip, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). St. John the Theologian expresses the faith that the apostles experienced Christ the incarnate God with their own senses:

> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched

> with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:1–4)

In Greek, the iconographer is referred to as the *agiographos*, literally meaning "holy writer." The English word *iconographer* implies that the artist *writes* icons. These terms have come down to us because icons are viewed by the Church as a type of visual gospel. When called upon to depict something as simple as a single figure from the Old or New Testament or a complex, many-figured scene from the Bible, the iconographer is called to meditate on the Holy Scripture's description of the scene. Furthermore, the iconographer ought to be faithful to the theological meaning of the scene as it moves from the written word on the pages of scripture to the visual "word" (in the sense of the term "word" as synonymous with "image") in any of the varieties of iconographic expression that have been handed down to the Church throughout the ages. Just as scripture has been delivered in a variety of ways—hand-carved in stone, handwritten with ink on parchment or papyrus, or printed on paper with a press—so also icons come to us in a variety of forms—encaustic, mosaic, ivory, metal, marble, wood carvings, enamels, egg tempera, oil, acrylic, prints on paper, and even contemporary electronic images.

The iconographer, therefore, no matter how skilled in the technique of any particular medium, will find an inexhaustible treasure of blessings in the spiritual discipline of meditation on Holy Scripture. He or she ought to be familiar with not only the theological meaning of the scene to be depicted but also with the spiritual disciplines outlined in the Bible on how to live a life that is pleasing to God in holiness. Iconography is a sacred art form, and therefore the iconographer is called to seek the face of the Lord through meditation on the word of God so as to open the iconographer's mind, heart, and soul to the grace of the Holy Spirit, the true source of all inspiration.

HOLY TRADITION

The second well of inspiration for today's iconographer is the sacred source of holy tradition. The iconographer may find inspiration in the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines of the Church. Knowledge of the writings set forth in the first seven ecumenical councils will provide a resource and guide for the iconographer toward depictions that are theologically sound. This is especially important in the iconographer's attempts to depict God the Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in relation to other figures in any scene and other acceptable forms and figures regarding the persons of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. For example, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed expresses the faith of the ecumenical councils, which clearly define the person of Jesus Christ as coeternal and equal to God the Father. For this reason, since God stands outside of time yet came to us in time and space, the contemporary iconographer is not simply following tradition but is inspired to depict the face of the baby Jesus with that of a wise older child, even in his infancy, even if this means that the face of Christ is not chronologically consonant with that of an infant in his mother's arms.

Another example of the importance of holy tradition is the controversial issue of the depiction of God the Father. Over the centuries, Eastern Orthodox theological consensus has favored the depiction of God the Father using symbolic imagery rather than the image of an old man, such as the angels of the Old Testament story of the hospitality of Abraham (Gen. 18) made famous through Rublev's *Trinity*. The Moscow Council in 1666–67 prohibited the painting of icons depicting the Father, but despite the authority of this plenary council, the question of portraying the unseen God as an icon remains controversial.[1] The cause of such controversy is the patristic sense of the utter "otherness" of God's nature, leading many Church Fathers to speak of God in an apophatic manner. The incomprehensibility of God's nature and the inability of humanity to apprehend it made depicting images of God the Father impossible. Of course, the scene as recorded in the book of Revelation of God the Father and the Son as one in the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7) may give some biblical basis for the depiction of God the Father in the form of an old man with a white beard (Rev. 1:14).

The contemporary iconographer may also find spiritual direction in the reading of the Holy Fathers; especially those who helped defend the use of images in the Church that led to the Seventh Ecumenical Council, such as the St. John of Damascus work entitled "On the Divine Images."[2] The writing of St. John inspires the iconographer in the understanding that the iconographer's work is an extension of one of the most essential of Christian teachings, that is, that the doctrine of the veneration of images is an inevitable result of the Incarnation. Therefore, the work of the iconographer—to depict the invisible made visible—is a good and praiseworthy thing, a holy vocation, a visual ministry.

PUBLICATIONS

The third fountain of inspiration for the contemporary iconographer comes from the rich and deep wellspring of books, journals, and numerous other types of publications on the history, theology, and practice of iconography. Some works that have inspired me regarding the theology of iconography include *Orthodox Iconography* and *Byzantine Sacred Art* by Constantine Cavarnos; *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty* by Paul Evdokimov; *Theology of the Icon* by Leonid Ouspensky; and *The Meaning of Icons* by Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky.[3] Art history books are also a source of inspiration from both a historical and visual context. Filled with large and vivid color prints and art historical commentary, the volumes of my collection of art history books often inspire me.[4] In addition to the theological and historical books, the contemporary iconographer is well served to study books and periodicals on the technique of iconography.[5]

STUDIO EXPERIENCE

Periodicals such as the *Sacred Art Journal*, published by the St. John of Damascus Association of Orthodox Iconographers, Iconologists, and Architects, are particularly helpful because they include techniques from contemporary working iconographers who use both ancient and

modern methods and materials. This leads me to the fourth source of living water for today's iconographer, studio experience. The studio source begins with the spirit and moves to a labor of love.

Nothing is more important for the contemporary iconographer's inspiration than studio experience. My undergraduate major at the College of Wooster was studio art, where I learned the basics of drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, and art history. I recall how the head of the Art Department had a favorite saying: "Good art is the result of 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration." My experience has taught me the truth of this statement. Upon entering seminary at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, I was blessed to be hired as an apprentice to Byzantine iconographer Nick Fotiou. To get the job I had to show him my art portfolio, which contained a variety of drawings and paintings in my own personal style, but no icons. Nick said, "I can see that you have the art skills to do the job, but are you willing to die to yourself and your own style and follow the traditional prototypes of Byzantine iconography?" I responded with an inspired yes. Inspiration quickly turned to perspiration, however, when I faced the hard and humbling work of serving as an iconographer's apprentice in decorating the dome in St. Constantine and Helen's Greek Orthodox Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

We produced the work both in Fotiou's studio at his home and from the on-site studio we set up atop of the scaffolding fifty feet high, where we prepared the final application of the figures and decorative borders. At last, after one year, our hard labor was finished. The dome had all of the typical Byzantine figures: Jesus Christ the *Pantocrator*, Mary the *Theotokos*, John the Baptist, Old Testament prophets, and the four evangelists. This dome also had numerous angels, including cherubim and seraphim. When we were finished and all of our supplies were taken down from the dome, we both heard chanting in Greek—it was the Trisagion, or thrice-holy hymn (Isa. 6:1–3).[6] Nick assumed that I had left our tape player up on the scaffolding, so I climbed the fifty feet one last time to see if I had left it up there playing. I heard the chanting of the thrice-holy hymn upon my ascent, but there was no tape player. I hurried down the ladders and explained

this to Nick that there was no tape player up there. "Well," Nick replied, "either we are both crazy and are hearing the same thing as a mutual form of ecstasy, or the angels are rejoicing that we have finished our labor to the glory of God."

I recall being assigned by the late Metropolitan Anthony of San Francisco to assist the Cretan iconographer Michael Vasilakis in painting the dome of the catholicon of the Life-Giving Spring Monastery in Dunlap, California. At first distrustful of me (his own assistant from Crete was denied a visa to come to the United States), Vasilakis soon grew to trust me as he saw my work in progress. Over a three-week period during the month of August, we labored together in temperatures exceeding 110 degrees—we were fifty feet up on scaffolding in the interior dome of a church that had no ventilation. This job changed my professor's formula in my mind from 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration to 1 and 99, respectively. Nevertheless, when the job was finished and the scaffolding removed, the work glistened as a delight to behold. I was told that His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, on seeing the completed dome, the crown of his most favorite accomplishment of his ministry, lay down on his back on the marble floor of the convent and gazed for hours at the dome. As the aged bishop arose, he was overheard by one of the nuns as reciting the prayer of St. Simeon the Righteous Elder, "O Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to enlighten the gentiles, and glory for your people, Israel" (Canticle of Simeon, Luke 2:29–32). Not long after that, His Eminence fell asleep in the Lord, and he was buried at the west end of the catholicon.

The iconographer's studio is a place apart from the world where the artist is inspired to create images for churches or for private devotion in homes of the faithful. This is a sacred task, and the studio is a reflection of the spiritual discipline required to undertake the sacred art of iconography. The idea of sacred space and sacred ground is a common theme in Christianity, East and West. In this sacred space the iconographer should be surrounded with the resources to inspire: Holy Scripture, the writings of the Holy Fathers, icon books and publications, and art supplies for the craft. Apprenticeship with a master iconographer and

participation in workshops offered by experienced iconographers will provide the beginning iconographer with the opportunity to be immersed in a studio setting under the guidance of a trained teacher.

Personally, I have worked in many studios in various settings and have taken something home from each of them to my own studio that has contributed to my development in this sacred art. Ideally, as iconography is a spiritual art, there is an altar set aside in the studio for prayer. The studio may be considered a place apart from worldly distractions where the iconographer enters into deep prayer before, during, and after the completion. This brings me to the fifth source of inspiration for the iconographer, prayer and fasting.

PRAYER AND FASTING

The iconographer may be inspired by the acquisition of the Holy Spirit and God's grace through the spiritual discipline of prayer and fasting. According to tradition, the iconographer ought to make the sign of the cross, pray in silence, and forgive everyone everything before beginning work. During work, the artist is called to work on every detail as if in the presence of the Lord himself. One should pray in silence, avoiding useless words, and fast in order to be strengthened physically and spiritually. Prayer should be directed toward the intercessions of the saint the iconographer is depicting. The artist is called to keep his or her mind free from distractions so that the saint will be close to them. It is helpful for the iconographer to listen to recordings or memorize and recite mentally in silent prayer the church hymn dedicated to the saint whose portrait is being depicted.

Regarding the choice of colors, the iconographer should stretch his arms interiorly to the Lord and ask for divine counsel. If working in a group setting, the iconographer must pray not to be jealous of her neighbor's work. The artist's neighbor's success is her success. Upon completion of an icon, the artist should offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for granting the grace needed for the iconographer to complete the holy image. The artist should place the completed icon on the studio altar and be the first to pray before it before offering it to others for

prayer. The iconographer may then prayerfully be gladdened in the joy of spreading icons to the world as a visual gospel, in the joy received in the work of iconography, in the joy of giving the saint the possibility to shine through his icon, and in the joy of being in union with the saint depicted. Finally, the iconographer is called to practice the Jesus Prayer ("O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.") unceasingly as a form of spiritual discipline to purify his soul, illuminate his mind, and to bring the iconographer in union with God.

Father Luke Dingman offers the following "Prayer before Beginning an Icon":

> O Divine Lord of all that exists,
> Thou hast illumined the Apostle and Evangelist
> Luke with thy Holy Spirit, thereby
> Enabling him to represent thy most Holy Mother,
> The One who held Thee in her arms and said:
> "The Grace of Him Who has been born of me
> Is spread throughout the world."
> Enlighten and direct my soul,
> My heart and my spirit.
> Guide the hands of thine unworthy servant
> So that I may worthily and perfectly portray
> Thine icon, that of thy Mother,
> And all the Saints,
> For the glory, joy, and adornment
> Of thy Holy Church.
> Forgive my sins and the sins of those
> Who will venerate these icons
> And who, kneeling devoutly before them,
> Give homage to those they represent.
> Protect them from all evil and instruct them
> With good counsel.
> This I ask through the intercession of
> Thy most Holy Mother, the Apostle Luke,
> And all the Saints.
> Amen.

There exists a prayer for the consecration of an anonymous iconographer from Mount Athos:

Thou who hast so admirably imprinted
Thy features on the cloth sent to King Abgar of Edessa,
And hast so wonderfully inspired Luke Thy Evangelist:
Enlighten my soul and that of thy servant;
Guide his hand that he may reproduce thy features,
Those of the Holy Virgin and of all thy saints,
For the glory and peace of thy holy church.
Spare him from temptations and diabolical imaginations
In the name of thy Mother, St. Luke, and all the saints.
Amen.

After the completion of an icon this prayer may be offered:

Thou, thyself, O Lord,
Are the fulfillment and completion of all good things.
Fill my soul with joy and gladness,
For thou alone art the lover of mankind.
Let thy grace sanctify and dwell within this icon,
That it may edify and inspire those who gaze upon it and venerate it;
That in glorifying the one depicted,
They may be repentant of their sins
And strengthened against every attack of the adversary.
Through the prayers of the Theotokos,
The holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke,
And all the saints,
O Savior, save us!
Amen.

PILGRIMAGE

The sixth well of inspiration is pilgrimage. Sacred space and sacred places exist throughout Christendom. Travel to churches, monaster-

ies, convents, and other sacred sites serves to inform the artist visually and spiritually. Contemplation of ancient prototypes by the artist in the original location of these images provides an atmosphere that cannot be duplicated by any mechanical means, such as a print or a projected image. Indeed, modern museums often serve as sacred spaces, providing the opportunity to experience ancient art face-to-face. Museums allow the viewer to experience ancient prototypes in the original, albeit removed from the original architectural framework and locale. Nevertheless, when travel to a distant sacred location is impossible, the iconographer is well served to visit museums that feature the sacred art of iconography.

I have identified six sources of inspiration for the contemporary iconographer: (1) Holy Scripture, (2) holy tradition, (3) publications, (4) studio experience, (5) prayer and fasting, and (6) pilgrimage. This list is not exhaustive and is based on my experience in the practice of the art and craft of iconography over the last three decades. Further exploration into this area of study may reveal many other hidden wells. The ultimate source of inspiration for the iconographer is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, who is the Heavenly King, Comforter, and Spirit of Truth, the heart, mind, and hands of the iconographer move as one with the Creator and Giver of Life, so that the final work is not *by the hands* but rather *through the hands* of the servant of God, the artist, who is a vessel through which the Holy Spirit transforms physical matter into spiritual matter. This, indeed, is a mystery that cannot be described in words, but it may be revealed in time and space by God's mercy and grace.

NOTES

1. See Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992), 2:371–87.

2. St. John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, trans. and intro. Andrew Louth (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

3. Cornelia Tsakiridou, *Icons in Time, Persons in Eternity: Orthodox Theology and the Aesthetics of the Christian Image* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Leslie Brubaker,

Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm, Studies in Early Medieval History (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012); Constantine Cavarnos, *Orthodox Iconography: Four Essays* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1977); Fotis Kontoglous and Constantine Cavarnos, *Byzantine Sacred Art: Selected Writings of the Contemporary Greek Icon Painter Fotis Kontoglous on the Sacred Arts according to the Tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Belmont, MA: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1985); Paul Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty* (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1990); Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*; Vladimir Lossky and Leonid Ouspensky, *The Meaning of Icons*, trans. G.E.H. Palmer and E. Kadloubovsky (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982).

4. Too numerous to list them all, some of my favorite sources include Lilya Evseyeva, *A History of Icon Painting*, trans. Kate Cook (Moscow: "Grand-Holding" Publishers/Orthodox Christian Books, 2005); Konrad Onasch and Annemarie Schnieper, *Icons: The Fascination and the Reality* (New York: Riverside Book Company, 1997); Kurt Weitzmann et al., *The Icon* (New York: Knopf, 1982); Patrick Doolan, *Recovering the Icon: The Life and Work of Leonid Ouspensky*, foreword by Anthony Bloom (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008). Most recently, I have turned to the book by Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins, eds., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007), based on the wonderful exhibition of icons from St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, November 14, 2006, to March 4, 2007.

5. These include George Kordis, *Icon as Communion: The Ideals and Compositional Principles of Icon Painting*, trans. Caroline Makropoulos (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010); Lilia Evseyeva et al., *A History of Icon Painting: Sources, Traditions, Present Day*, trans. Kate Cook (Moscow: "Grand Holding" Publishers/Orthodox Christian Books, 2005); Egon Sendler, *The Icon, Image of the Invisible: Elements of Theology, Aesthetics and Technique* (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1988); Dionysius of Fourna, *Exphrasis*: *Byzantine Painter's Manual*, trans. Paul Hetherington (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1990); and Christopher P. Kelley, ed., *An Iconographer's Patternbook: The Stroganov Tradition* (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1989). I also have been greatly inspired by four studio art books that to my best knowledge are only available in Greek: *Ekphrasis* (*Expression*) by Photios Kontoglou, which is considered the bible for the revival of the Byzantine style; *H Texniki tis Agiosgrafias* (*The Technique of Iconography*) by Iwannou-xarilaou Branou; *Byzantiki Diakosmitiki* (*Byzantine Decorative Art*) by P. Vaboulis; and *O Kritikos Zografos Theofanis* (*The Greek Painter Theofanis*) by Manolis Xatzidakis. Also see the new video (DVD) produced by the

Prosopon School of Iconology, *The Icon Writing: Theory and Practice*, taught by Vladislav Andrejev; ed. Yevgeniy Vaskevich; narrated by Dmitri Andreyev (Whitney Point, NY: Prosopon School of Iconology, 2009).

6. A processional chant that became a permanent part of the Byzantine eucharistic liturgy by the sixth century. See Robert F. Taft, "Trisagion," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5601 (accessed November 8, 2013).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Can I Pray with This Icon If It's Only a Print?

Toward a Pastoral Interpretation of Orthodox Iconography

ANDRIY CHIROVSKY

The title of this chapter is meant to provoke a certain response. By referring to a printed rather than painted icon as "*only* a print," it points to an established hierarchy of value that is currently challenged not only by lithography (how quaint a concept!) but also by the ubiquity of images in the digital universe. The title also brings up the confusion of the devout person who wants to do the right thing amid a perplexing variety of options. Since this chapter will probably be read by people with some advanced knowledge of iconography, I expect most readers to smile condescendingly at the question posed in the title—at least at first—but then to begin to respond to the pastoral question that presents itself. I ask the reader to ponder some of the *pastoral* issues with me.

THEOLOGICAL BUT ALSO PASTORAL

The historical development of Orthodox iconography makes it abundantly clear that icons exist in the realm of doctrine. The immense

significance of the Iconoclast controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries establishes the central connections between Christological dogma and Orthodox religious art. Even phrasing it thus raises Orthodox eyebrows. Every well-formed Eastern Christian knows the vast difference between the East's Orthodox iconography and the Christian West's religious art—art on a religious theme that remains unregulated and is thus the expression of the individual artist's ideas rather than being the semiofficial statement of the Church's teaching expressed in line and color. Indeed, the Christian West never developed a theology of icons the way that the East has done. The clash with Iconoclasm forced a nuancing of Orthodox thought. St. John of Damascus focuses on the Incarnation as the reality that changes attitudes toward images.[1] St. Theodore the Studite makes clear the relationship between the image and its prototype.[2] The Iconoclast controversy forced the Christological debates of the fifth century and later into greater relief, as the depictability of the divine-human Jesus was discussed. Indeed, the understanding of the icon is a theological question, a question of great doctrinal importance, precisely because of the various Christological issues that are connected to it. The question of whether an icon may receive veneration is a doctrinal issue, but it is also a pastoral issue. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II, 787) delineates precisely how it is possible to venerate icons and clarifies that one may never extend *latreia* ("worship") to an image but that "relative veneration" (*proskynesis schetike*) is acceptable.

That is precisely where the doctrinal and the pastoral moments intersect. The determining of what an icon is has direct consequences for how one might be expected to act in connection with an icon. Once it is determined that an icon does not by its very existence constitute an idol, and does not contravene the prohibition against graven images, one end of an acceptable continuum is established. As long as the icon is not worshipped, it is acceptable. But it is not immediately apparent where the other end of the continuum of the acceptable might lie. When does an image that is given the proper kind of veneration *cease* to be an Orthodox icon?

Over several decades of teaching the theology and spirituality connected with Orthodox iconography I have encountered wave after

wave of students who have been confused about what is and what is not within the realm of the acceptable when it comes to Orthodox icons. Some focus on the materials or medium used, recognizing almost immediately that egg tempera images on wood panels and fixed images on walls, whether fresco or mosaic, are genuine icons. These same students may become a little wary when exposed to reverse glass images because these may be less familiar to them. Others are comfortable with "flat" images but become quite wary when any notion of three-dimensional art is introduced, until they learn the difference between relief and sculpture in the round (even though that differentiation is somewhat artificial). I have often asked myself why, when it comes to such issues of materials or medium, certain kinds of icons seem to some of my students more immediately acceptable than others. I do not find Western Christians or non-Christians to have the same sort of preconceived notions as I find among students who are Orthodox or Eastern Catholic. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Eastern Christians who are quick to render judgment in this area before studying the field or even reading a little more extensively usually rely on their own experience. They have seen panel icons, murals (rarely frescoes), and even mosaics. Most of them have not been exposed to icons in other materials or media. Many are quite confident that "statues are out," even if they can't yet explain why. Again, it is because they go back in their minds to the usually limited experiences they have of Eastern Christian churches (I can often *see* this happening on their faces as their eyes retrace their steps through remembered church buildings) and they know that they have not seen statues in them.

All of this is still at a very innocent, quite naïve level of understanding, as it is usually in the first week of the course. They have, after all, signed up for the course with the idea that they are going to learn about Orthodox iconography, and they are mostly very receptive to new insights. At this point, they have not yet been introduced to notions of what might cast doubt upon the orthodoxy of an icon from the point of view of content rather than execution. "If it looks like an icon, it must be an icon" seems to be the prevailing approach. Interestingly, what happens somewhere in mid-semester is that they begin to develop very narrow notions of what is acceptable. I have tested my perception

of this phenomenon with various groups of students, and it seems to be borne out again and again. When I show an image of the Holy Trinity in impeccable Novgorodian style that depicts the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the beginning of the semester, students will identify it as a "real icon." After they have heard about the 1551 Stoglav Council and its prohibition of this type of image, they will self-righteously sneer "heretical icon" when shown the same slide. This is a very interesting phenomenon, which might be adduced to demonstrate that, indeed, a little knowledge can be a very dangerous thing.

I do not mean to defend the many images of what some call the "Divine Paternity," and others name the "New Testament Trinity." That is not my point. There are theological reasons for rejecting such images, based on the Orthodox understanding of the Father, unlike the incarnate Son, as beyond any depiction whatsoever. What interests me is the process going on in the minds of the students as they begin to pass judgment on images at this relatively early stage of understanding. It mirrors my own understanding, which had taken root when it was difficult to find literature that would explain icons in anything much more than terms of art history.

AN ELEMENT OF HOLY TRADITION

Icons, along with Holy Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, the teaching of the ecumenical councils, the liturgy, canons, and hagiography, are considered elements of holy tradition by Orthodox Christians, which means that they have doctrinal implications. Icons are often referred to as "theology in color."[3] The eighteenth, nineteenth, and the first half of the twentieth centuries were not a time when one would have encountered many "traditional" icons in the homes or the churches of most Eastern Christians in North America. By "traditional" here I mean those from which one might be able to derive holy tradition or that express that tradition of the Christian East. This, clearly, was my own experience.

Born in the mid-1950s, I grew up with images in a devout Ukrainian Catholic home near Newark, New Jersey. My parents were World War II

refugees. We certainly were not wealthy. The images that abounded in every room of our home were similar to those that I could see in most of the homes of our extended family and friends, all Eastern Christians (Eastern Catholic or Orthodox). They were lithographs of (often German) devotional images that were often reproduced on wall calendars, in religious magazines, and on prayer cards. Apparently, several German lithographers had discovered a very lucrative market for such images long before anyone could even dream of challenging them with any "Byzantine" type images. Indeed, in many lands that one could classify as Orthodox, churches and homes were dominated by sentimental Baroque images that were identifiable as Orthodox icons only inasmuch as they had Greek or Slavonic inscriptions and roughly approximated the content of icons of earlier centuries. Few were interested in the more ancient iconography since, in its rejection of naturalism and such commonplaces of post-Renaissance art as linear perspective, it seemed strange to many people. Many Orthodox and Eastern Catholics had lost the vernacular of Byzantine iconography, and it did not speak to them. These more sentimental images seemed more approachable somehow, and the old, heavily theological iconography was treated by both clergy and laity as the art of a bygone era, often even seen as backwards.

Then Andrei Rublev's *Trinity* was cleaned at the beginning of the twentieth century and a renewed interest in the icons of old emerged.[4] Literature on Orthodox iconography began to be published more frequently. At first this literature was accessible only to scholars and specialists, but it began to make significant inroads into the popular consciousness of Eastern Christian believers. For many, the first book that really cemented the relationship between ancient Orthodox iconography and other expressions of Orthodox tradition was Lossky and Ouspensky's volume, *The Meaning of Icons*.[5] Since the appearance of that watershed publication, which introduced the subject to a much wider audience, innumerable books, articles, and other resources have appeared in various languages. Every year sees the appearance of scores of additional print materials. Extensive new resources can be found on the Internet, some excellent and others of dubious quality.

THE PASTORAL ISSUES

Perhaps one way to delineate between the doctrinal and pastoral questions involved is to identify the former with various Christological issues. Without the incarnation of the Lord it would be impossible to depict the divine, St. John of Damascus reminds us.[6] Either a fully Monophysite or a Nestorian Christology would similarly make icons of the Lord problematic in that actual Monophysitism would seem to make Christ's humanity swallowed up by his divinity, and Nestorianism would so thoroughly differentiate between the two as to force any depiction of Christ to choose between the two, with an unfortunate result. These two irreconcilable positions—both unacceptable—were the subject of accusations hurled back and forth during the Iconoclast controversy.[7] There were also socioeconomic issues at play in this struggle, of course, but in the long run those who supported the veneration of icons prevailed, provided some minimum guarantees were in place. The figures in an icon needed to be recognizable, so that the veneration might pass through the image to the correct prototype.[8] The inscriptions on icons were meant precisely to clarify to whom this veneration was to pass.

The pastoral issues are related, even if somewhat different. How does one respond to those who relate with proper iconodule devotion to something that does not immediately qualify as properly iconographic? How does one decide what is, in fact, properly iconographic? When it comes to subject matter, there are plenty of "experts" who are ready to tell us what is acceptable and what is uncanonical. The problem is that the relevant canons are very limited in what they prescribe and what they forbid.

The so-called canons of the Quinisext Council (692) simply forbid the depiction of Christ as a lamb, because after the Incarnation, the Lamb of God should not be depicted in a purely metaphorical manner.[9] I have known otherwise ecumenically disposed Orthodox Christians who nevertheless balked at praying in a Roman Catholic or Protestant space that contained an image of the Lamb, precisely because it contravened this canon. All Roman hesitation about these canons aside, at least one can claim that to the Orthodox this is (the continuation of) an ecumenical council. Other delineations of what is and what is not acceptable in Orthodox iconography do not have such pedigree.

I often hear people pontificate on a particular icon's canonicity. I am not speaking here of experts, but rather of a typical Eastern Christian. Sometimes they are on the mark, but in other instances it is simply bluster. When the person is asked why they think one icon is acceptable but another is not, they often offer vague explanations, and I suspect it comes down to the fact that someone with a reputation for authoritative pronouncements (whether deserved or not is another issue) told them so. I can understand this desire to differentiate in no uncertain terms between what is acceptable and what is not and to pronounce upon it. It is often a feature of Orthodox spirituality, especially—but not exclusively—among neophytes. Converts to Orthodox or Eastern Catholic Churches are notorious for this kind of attitude.[10] I myself experienced it in my youth, in the first few years of acquaintance with the deeper meaning of icons. I became what I would call an "icon Nazi," wanting to purge unacceptable images from both churches and homes, vigilantly on the lookout for uncanonical icons. In time, I learned to look beyond appearances and to observe what was really happening between the believer and the icon.

This is by no means to say that the canonicity of an icon is unimportant. What is crucial is that there is much more to what makes for a legitimate icon, one that is useful for the spiritual life of an Orthodox believer, than the "iconographic style" of an image. In fact, the faithful need to be warned of the existence of images that are in impeccable iconographic style but that are theologically very dubious, if not opposed outright to the teaching of the Church. Over the centuries there have been many appeals by the Church not to attempt to depict God the Father (usually as an older form of Jesus), because He is not incarnate and is therefore uncircumscribable and undepictable, pure spirit. There have also been attempts to depict the Holy Spirit as a man. The Church has responded with the rejection of such depictions, for theological rather than aesthetic reasons. Even the depiction of the Holy Spirit as a dove outside of the one context of the baptism of our Lord Jesus in the Jordan River is frowned upon, since the Holy Spirit did not permanently assume the nature of the dove, as the Son did with human nature. This was only a single, momentary appearance. And yet, the image often called the "Divine Paternity" or the "New Testament Trinity" with an old God the Father, with a young Jesus on his lap, and

the Holy Spirit as a dove is persistently present in churches and in homes, no matter how strongly the Church cautions against it. This image has been produced thousands of times in both evidently Baroque and strictly Byzantine styles and does not seem to be going away. In Muscovy, where the Tsar ruled as autocrat, the Stoglav Council of 1551 directed thus: "Let those who up to now have painted icons without having learned to, who paint fancifully, without either practice or conformity to the image, have their works taken away from them and sold to simple and ignorant people in the villages for next to nothing: the painters of these icons will be obliged to learn from good masters."[11] The matter of encouraging icon painters to conform to canonical standards continued in the Church through the issuing of ecclesial directives—the Moscow Council of 1666–67 prohibited the depiction of the Father in icons. Steven Bigham's work in this area, which includes a number of English translations of texts, shows that the legitimacy of depicting the Father in iconography remained an issue of debate in the Church.

It took a while to resolve the issue of the depiction of God the Father, as Ouspensky explains, with Church authorities vacillating between the defense and the rejection of this image in different contexts, but in the end it came to be condemned.[12] And yet it perseveres, apparently because it responds to some deep need that many faithful have to see the Father to whom they address that crucial prayer taught to the apostles by Jesus himself. It is true that catechesis needs vast improvement throughout the Church. Perhaps that will solve the issue, perhaps not.

I cannot fail to be struck by the Stoglav Council's decision to dump improper icons on the "simple and ignorant people in the villages." Apparently such people were considered so hopelessly incapable of the fullness of Orthodox life that it was acceptable to fill their homes with theologically offensive images. Pastorally, this seems to be a nightmare scenario, with class trumping basic human dignity. One can only hope that some permutation of it will not be repeated in our own day. And yet, the commercialization of iconography creates this same danger: unenlightened buyers might very well purchase for themselves images that are theologically dubious or simply insipid, perhaps out of deficiencies in the spiritual life of the person producing the image.

A very painful case in point is the proliferation of icon-like images of various personages, real or imagined, which are technically and artistically masterful but have little connection with Orthodox tradition. Perhaps the most well known (and most commercially successful) example of this can be found in the work of Robert Lentz.[13] This Franciscan came to a deeper appreciation of Byzantine iconography while researching his Eastern European roots and did an apprenticeship in iconography with Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts. Indeed, one readily perceives a stylistic affinity between the work of Lentz and the high-quality icons produced by that monastery. When he stays within the canon of Orthodox iconography, his work is powerful in its spiritual message and of high aesthetic value. The problem is that Lentz has strayed so far beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable that his work has become dangerous. Some Orthodox may be peeved by his depiction of various Roman Catholic saints in iconographic form. That does not particularly bother me. Iconography belongs to the Church. If the Roman Church wants to use Orthodox iconography to make present its saints, and the iconographic form is something we Eastern Christians believe is a powerful way to make them present for us in our spiritual growth, then that is something to be lauded rather than held in disdain. What is much more problematic is Lentz's canonization of favorite secular figures from the recent past. The politician Harvey Milk and the scientist Albert Einstein are well-known figures, but to render them as saints, with accompanying inscriptions that read "*ho hagios Harvios*" and "*ho hagios Alvertos*," is to individually appropriate for oneself the authority to glorify, that is, canonize saints, which belongs to the Church as a whole.

When non-Christians, such as the Oglala shaman Black Elk or the Indian champion of nonviolent resistance Mohandas Gandhi, are rendered as Christian saints, the understanding of what a constitutes a Christian saint is undermined. And this is central for iconography. We venerate the images of saints because they themselves have allowed their relationship with the triune God to divinize them. Icons are not simply representations of the bodies of human beings in the fallen state. They make present for us the appearance of the human person precisely as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a transfigured reality, in which the divine energies are no less present that in the transfiguration of the

Lord. It is these energies that make the Lord present in icons, and we see these same energies in the very bodies of the saints: those human beings who, created according to the image of God, have actualized the likeness to Him. Icons make this reality visible to us, in order to draw us along that same path. To falsify the record of divinization by unilaterally proclaiming someone a saint is a very serious thing. At one point, after complaints from various Orthodox and Eastern Catholic groups, the enterprise that promoted the sale of Lentz's works changed its name from Bridge Building Icons to Bridge Building Images. As far as I can tell, the website no longer displays any of Lentz's work, and it now offers somewhat less objectionable material, focusing to a large degree on a Western Christian audience and making available iconographic images of Roman saints and some uncanonized individuals, along with other art on religious themes, but it does continue some of the kind of "enculturating" work that Lentz engaged in. His influence is certainly felt there.

Another example found in the controversial Web concerns Monastery Icons, a purveyor of technically correct—if uninspired—icon prints. In addition to traditional Eastern saints and festal icons, the website also offers a multitude of Roman devotional images, all rendered in "iconographic" style. Unlike Lentz's work, there seems to be no underlying social agenda driving the creation of images. The focus seems to be much more commercial. Their icon prints sell very broadly and can be found in homes and churches across North America, and perhaps beyond. The inscriptions are all in English. The business has been the focus of several Internet exposés by concerned Orthodox, who insist that the group behind the operation is a bizarre gnostic meld of Orthodoxy with Hinduism.[14] Apparently, to avoid bad publicity the website and the business were transferred to an entity known as "Sacred Arts Foundation" (not to be confused with the Roman Catholic "Foundation for the Sacred Arts"). The Sacred Arts Foundation at least until very recently was easily traceable to the same owners with the exotic belief system and strange associations. What is at stake here? This is apparently not just some innocuous nonprofit that caters to Roman Catholics who want an image in iconographic style of Padre Pio or St. Francis of Assisi along with some icons with traditional Orthodox content. It seems to be a moneymaking enterprise for a very business-savvy

syncretist religious group. There is certainly no reason to panic about this for anyone owning an icon purchased from this operation, but there is perhaps reason to make sure it is properly blessed and that it does not exert negative spiritual influences on the unsuspecting Eastern Christian believer. Most importantly, it is probably a good idea to avoid their wares. Today there are plenty of places to purchase icons (but it might be a good idea for some Orthodox establishments to learn a thing or two from these folks about marketing and meeting the sizing needs of their customers, to name just a few things they do well).

This brings me to a subject that I touched upon earlier. Many Eastern Christians now have or at one time had images that were not of the canonical Orthodox type. This is true of both individuals and churches. In fact, it is much more difficult to change an image in a church than it is to do in one's own home, because the original benefactors or their descendants will often protest vehemently. The problem is not confined to Eastern Catholics by any means. Orthodox parishes and families have the same "problem." I put the word "problem" in quotation marks because, in fact, there are multitudes of people who have drawn closer to the Lord through the Baroque permutations of Orthodox subject matter that nevertheless retain Greek or Old Slavonic inscriptions, or through entirely Western Christian art that does not even pretend to be an icon. The countless lithographs of Christ praying in Gethsemane, of the Man of Sorrows, of da Vinci's *Last Supper* that have witnessed the tearful or joyful prayers and supplications of millions of faithful are not so easily discounted. I have sought out and present here some excellent photographs by Sterling Demchinsky,[15] an Orthodox Ukrainian Canadian who has taken upon himself the task of systematically documenting the church architecture and iconography of the Ukrainian settlers who opened up the Canadian prairies and spread to its cities, great and small, dotting the landscape with domes and three-barred crosses (figs. 8.1 to 8.21). He offers witness to the sometimes imposing artistic skills and almost comic naïveté of the folks who decorated these many churches, which today may belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church of America, the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, or several other jurisdictions. It is safe to assume that other ethnic groups who live the Orthodox tradition have experienced a very similar history. If Christ the Savior Cathedral in

Moscow is any indication, it is not impossible to live out a full Orthodox liturgical life even amid the busiest Baroque art.

The point is that icons are mainly about prayer.[16] They are vehicles for spiritual ascent that, when created[17] in conformity with the fullness of Orthodox tradition (meaning their biblical grounding, their doctrinal content in conformity with the teachings of the ecumenical councils and the writings of the Fathers, their echoing of liturgical texts and resonance with ritual action, their ascetical messages, and their general apophaticism), are enormously effective at drawing the faithful closer to the ultimate goal of *theosis*. When they are additionally also of great artistic merit (and many simply are not, no matter how well they conform to other criteria), they benefit from the power of beauty itself to bring one closer to God, the Creator who made everything *kalos*, the Greek word employed in the Septuagint's Genesis creation account and that means simultaneously "good" and "beautiful." When an icon is lovingly painted by a holy ascetic whose intention it is to convey the living tradition with the amazingly subtle artistry of egg tempera in thin layers, crisscrossed a hundredfold over a white gesso ground and the light of a hanging lamp hits that icon, penetrating through the color to the gesso and reflecting back through the layers, it often seems to come alive and draw the person or community praying before it into communion, enabling them to "fall into the eyes of the icon," or rather the one depicted in it.[18]

What, then, is the answer that I would give to the question posed in the title of this chapter? After more than thirty years of teaching and publishing in the field, I think I would phrase it thus. If you can get yourself in front of a "correctly" composed and executed, hand-painted icon done by a prayerful, morally upright, true-believing Christian iconographer who is endowed with both profound humility and outstanding artistic talent, go for it. If all you have available to you is a print of such an icon, don't worry, but rather pray with confidence. But if the only thing available to you, as you try to live your Orthodox faith to its fullest, is a wall calendar with a second-rate rendering of the Man of Sorrows, throw yourself into it. The Lord is still there. After all, when I stand in my icon corner and pray before the beautiful and canonically correct icons, arranged in the proper way, with a hanging *lampada* before them, I often pray with my eyes closed.

Figure 8.1 A "New Testament Trinity" in St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church (1928) at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village near Elk Island National Park, east of Edmonton, Alberta. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.2 Lest someone think that Ukrainian Catholics still have no idea about iconography, look at the iconostasis of Sts. Volodymyr and Olha Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral in Winnipeg. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.3 Nativity of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Jaroslav, Saskatchewan. Note the prints as the main icons of the iconostasis, which consists of little more than this minimum and some very simple Royal Doors. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.4 St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in Theodore, Saskatchewan. Again a few prints, some more Eastern, some obviously Western, acquired and placed as best as the parish could, on a rather substantial iconostasis, which even has the katapetasmeta veil behind the Royal Doors. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.5 Icon based on *Our Lady of Czestochowa* (known to Ukrainians as the *Mother of God of Belz*) in St. Elias Orthodox Church in America, Rhein, Saskatchewan. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.6 Image of St. Michael. Holy Trinity Bukowynian Orthodox Church (OCA) in Ottawa. Russian Orthodox Lithograph from Odessa. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.7 St. James Orthodox Church (OCA) near Mundare, Alberta. This iconostasis features prints from various sources, including prerevolutionary Russian prints, which were usually produced in Odessa and were not available to Ukrainian Catholics. Even though they did have this supply of Russian prints, the parishioners still chose to feature prominently a reproduction of da Vinci's ever-popular *Last Supper* over the Royal Doors. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.8 The Russian Orthodox Church of the Ascension at Skaro, Alberta, has a rather ambitious iconostasis, but the images are all Baroque. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.9 One would not expect to find a Sacred Heart image in an Orthodox Church, but Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Hampton, Saskatchewan, proudly displays such an image, with the added plus that it advertises the Central Grocery in Buchanan, Saskatchewan. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.10 At Holy Resurrection Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Sunville, Manitoba, there is a collage of various prints, combined to fill up what was probably a preexisting frame. A very Orthodox-looking bishop shares the frame with some very Western art. The top image has numerous Polish inscriptions identifying various personages. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.11 Detail from the collage at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Sunville, Manitoba, showing Jesus before the Sanhedrin, with quotes (in Polish) from the various members beneath each one's name. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.12 In place of St. Macarius at the exaltation of the Holy Cross we see Patriarch Josyf the Confessor (Cardinal Slipyj) in St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Toronto. Slipyj had been recently liberated from eighteen years of incarceration in the Soviet GULAG in Siberia. This image was widely reproduced and marveled at by many at the time. It obviously spoke to people of the resilience of the Church of the Martyrs in Ukraine. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.13 These family icons are prints from Odessa at St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Gardenton Farms, Manitoba. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.14 This print of St. Barbara, from the Pokrova ("Protection of the Mother of God") Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edwand, Alberta, is embellished with coral necklace and chain with old coins, presumably as a type of votive offering. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.15 At St. Elias Orthodox Church in America, fourteen miles south of Veregin, Saskatchewan, we see a pietà with both Christ and the *Theotokos* wearing crowns. It is combined with the "seven sorrows" that afflict her heart. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.16 This modernistic representation of the Resurrection by Roman Kowal in Protection of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church is a hallmark of what was happening in the 1960s. This was also a time when other parishes began to implement plans of decorating their churches with serious Byzantine iconography. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.17 The Mother of God presents the Rosary to St. Dominic (unintentional ecumenism?). St. John Ukrainian Orthodox Church, south of Dauphin, Manitoba. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.18 Many churches are in a sad condition, and the few members of these rural parishes do not have the means to restore them. This image of God the Father in the central dome of Holy Transfiguration Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Pine River, Manitoba, probably would have been called "Ancient of Days" in order to escape the direct prohibition of the depiction of the Father. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.19 Images depicting Jesus with children are often inscribed with the words "Let the little children come to me." There are iconographic versions of this image, which is a print, surrounded by stenciling work done by Jacob Maydanyk. Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Stuartburn, Manitoba. Such images are often the center point of catechetical programs. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.20 There are few Western images that remain as popular in Orthodox churches as this "Man of Sorrows." Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Sandhill, Manitoba. Despite a real rediscovery of authentic iconography and a renaissance of iconographic church decoration, this image obviously speaks powerfully to many Orthodox. Although faded and stained, this image seems secure in its place. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

Figure 8.21 The image I grew up with, and before which I learned to pray, "Jesus Prays at Gethsemane," on the altar of St. Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Criegend, Alberta. Countless reproductions of this image appear in Eastern Churches in North America and even in Eastern Europe. More affluent parishes would commission an artist to paint a reproduction rather than simply put up a print. Photo: Sterling Demchinsky.

NOTES

1. St. John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, trans. and intro. Andrew Louth (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003).

2. St. Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, trans. Catherine Roth (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981).

3. Eugene N. Trubetskoi, *Icons: Theology in Color* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973).

4. According to Natalya Sheredega, "In 1904–05, the well-known painter, art-collector and Tretyakov Gallery trustee Ilya Ostroukhov suggested cleaning the original image from its later layers of paint, with the Moscow Archaeological Society supporting the proposal and offering its supervision of the project. That first uncovering was done, with the consent of the Lavra authorities, by Vasily Guryanov, an icon painter and restorer, assisted by Vladimir Tyulin and A. Izraztsov. As soon as the task was completed, a photograph of the original image was taken as it was revealed to the painters. The final restoration was completed by a joint team of the Central Restoration Workshops and the Zagorsk History and Art Museum in 1918–19. It was also recognized as unacceptable to hide with a frame what was an "exclusive, in its worldwide importance, work of art" from the palette of Andrei Rublev"; see Natalya Sheredega, "Andrei Rublev: Image of the 'Holy Trinity,'" *Tretyakov Gallery Magazine*, no. 3 (2013): 40, http://www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/№3-2013-40/andrei-rublev-image-holy-trinity.

5. Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989). The book was first published, simultaneously in German as *Der Sinn der Ikonen*, and in English by URS Graf Verlag in Bern. It was republished in 1969 by the Boston Book and Art Shop, Boston. St. Vladimir's published its revised version, enhanced with many more color plates in 1982 and offered in paperback, and it has done several printings of this edition.

6. Defense against those who attack the holy images (*Treatise I*, 16–17). For an English translation, see St. John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*, trans. Andrew Louth, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 29–32 .

7. Bulgakov offers an interesting interpretation of how both sides misunderstood some fundamental issues at stake in the Iconoclast controversy. See Sergius Bulgakov, *Icons and the Name of God*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 1–40.

8. St. Theodore the Studite, *Second Refutation of the Iconoclasts*, 24. For the English translation, see St. Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons*, trans. Catherine Roth (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981), 57–58.

9. Canon LXXXII of the Quinisext Council (or the Council *in Trullo*), 692, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/trullo.asp.

10. Amy Slagle, *The Eastern Church in the Spiritual Marketplace: American Conversions to Orthodox Christianity* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), 115.

11. Steven Bigham, *The Image of God the Father in Orthodox Theology and Iconography and Other Studies* (Torrance, CA: Oakwood, 1995), 132. See also by the same author, Stéphane Bigham, *L'art, l'icône et la Russie: Documents russes sur l'art et l'icône du XVIe siècle au XVIIIe siècle* (Sherbrooke, QC: Les Editions G.G.C., 2000).

12. See Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, 2 vols., trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992); see esp. vol. 2, chaps. 14–18 for an extended treatment of the question of what has been judged acceptable and what has been seen as unacceptable at various historical junctures in Orthodox iconography.

13. The work of Robert Lentz, O.F.M., is available for purchase from a website that identifies his images as icons. It describes its mission thus: "To be the best and most accessible provider of Catholic, Christian and Spiritual art to a world in much need of prayer. A world in need of goodness and kindness, of hope and of peace. A world in need of more Love and less Hate. Artworks that Heal, Images that Connect, Icons that Soothe the Soul." Many Eastern Christians would dispute the claim, especially as regards some of the works of Lentz and his associates; see www.trinitystores.com/company/profile/about-us. Lentz's work has been the centerpiece of two books: Robert Lentz and Edwina Gateley, *Christ in the Margins* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), and Joan D. Chittister, with Icons by Robert Lentz, *A Passion for Life: Fragments of the Face of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

14. Fr. Anthony Nelson, "A Word about 'Monastery Icons,'" http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/monasteryicons.aspx; published on the popular website of Orthodox Christian Information Center that is run by a convert to Orthodoxy and has been online since 1996. See also the extensive follow-up to the original article posted in a forum at http://www.orthodoxchristianity.net/forum/index.php?topic=13899.0. What quickly becomes evident is the extent to which the people behind Monastery Icons have gone over the years in order to mask who is behind it. Roman Catholics also raised the alarm: http://www.aquinasandmore.com/blog/?s=Monastery+Icons /. Also see http://www.christianforums.com/t3814045/.

15. See the photographs related to this article. Sterling Demchinsky of Ottawa, Canada, is in the process of preparing a major publication on the topic and has graciously granted me permission to utilize a few examples of his monumental photographic opus.

16. There are a growing number of publications on praying with icons, written by Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and others. For example, see the following: Jim Forest, *Praying with Icons* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997); Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987); Rowan Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons of Christ* (Toronto: Novalis, 2003).

17. Obviously, I don't mean *ex nihilo*. Sometimes I use the words "created" or "made" in reference to icons as a way of avoiding the false debate about whether one should use the term "paint" or "write" when talking about icons. As Robert Taft never tires of pointing out, the Greek *graphein* in the context of iconography simply means "to paint." However, for many, the use of the expression "writing icons" is simply a way to emphasize the depth of content and the *Logos*-centered reality of iconography. Is it perhaps not better to leave aside the absolutizing statements in this regard and to accept both renderings as valuable in their own ways? Thus, I happily employ the phrase "painting icons," even though I am also responsible for a six-part instructional video series entitled *To Write an Icon*, featuring the iconographer-monk Fr. Damian of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Redwood Valley, California. The series is available from the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at http://www.sheptytskyinstitute.ca.

18. See Andriy Chirovsky, "Falling into the Eyes of an Icon: A Theological Postscript," in *The Icon in Canada: Recent Findings from the Canadian Museum of Civilization*, ed. Robert B. Klymasz, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies Mercury Series Paper 69 (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1996).

Conclusion

NICHOLAS DENYSENKO

Readers of this volume have received the privilege of learning about the history, theology, and cultural significance of sacred art and iconography from East and West. Our collection of essays offers breadth, from exploring the meaning of *eikona* in the New Testament and patristic periods to contemplating the present and future of iconographic decoration in the Catholic Church after Vatican II. Our authors offer their presentations from particular fields of expertise: they are liturgists, iconographers, art historians, theologians, pastors, and systematicians who specialize in local cultures. We learned about the liturgical symbolism communicated by Middle Byzantine iconography, the use of icons during the Assumption feast in Rome, the relationship between iconography and the rite of dedication in Armenia, the process of preparing and painting employed by iconographers, the significance of venerating three-dimensional images, and the issues associated with venerating copies of icons.

Most readers will find one or two essays of interest in this volume, and the experts who have contributed should be consulted for additional detail, so I will not dilute the offerings by attempting to present a synthesis of the contributions. However, I do think that it is possible to

parse out a selection of themes that transcend the methodological and topical boundaries of the essays, and I would like to reflect on a few of these in conclusion—the Incarnation, the tension between domestic and liturgical veneration of images, the tenuous relationship between artists and the Church, and the natural human inclination to depict.

THE INCARNATION AND IDOLATRY

A few of our contributors reference the consequences of the Iconoclastic controversy in the history and theology of sacred art. We have no need to repeat the theological rationale that permits worship of God through icons of Christ and veneration of the saints and Mary. The essays we have read raise a number of related theological questions readers should consider. For example, we have noted how the patrons of the Lateran icon of Christ attend to its care and protection with meticulous detail. We have also witnessed the feverish devotion Chileans offer to the three-dimensional statues of Jesús Nazareno. Icons and images are established as customary, regular components of the liturgical assembly. It is normal to venerate an icon; if one places it in the midst of the nave, people will come forward to venerate it. Many Byzantine churches place icons on a tetrapod in the middle of the church. When the distribution of Communion begins, the deacon bids the assembly to draw near, and the people venerate the icons in the middle of the church even if such pious acts impede the pace and order of Communion.[1] When deacons and priests cense the church, they devotedly stop before the icons to which they have access. I have come to appreciate the order icons create in the church, because when I cense a space without icons, I lose my sense of order and find myself looking for icons or even censing the spaces they would typically occupy, like standing before an imaginary iconostasis with the censer. I offer this anecdote to honor the order icons offer: they truly depict the Church above and below, as Robert Taft states plainly in his essay.

On some occasions, though, icons tend to overwhelm the order of a church. I am not speaking of an abundance of ornamentation, which is generally a matter of local custom, but the preponderance of

wonder-working icons populating the liturgical calendar and captivating the devotional piety of the people. Wonder-working icons have followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, relics.[2] From late antiquity through today, local relics tend to generate regional devotion with claims of miracle healings.[3] The phenomenology of relics contributed to the practice of transferring relics, an ecclesial act of gift-giving where a local church shared its relics with a church of another region, often culminating with the local saint (whose relics were shared) gradually becoming universal through sharing relics. Wonder-working icons (and relics) often go on "tour," visiting other regional churches. The miracles attributed to the icon become quite influential, which leads to the icon itself enjoying a commemoration on a date of the liturgical year. It is quite common for churches to send a wonder-working icon to tour parishes for veneration. The promotional campaigns accompanying such visitations can be quite powerfully worded, with enthusiastic invitations for people to come and venerate the icon.

As one who has personally venerated myrrh-streaming relics and icons, I am not attempting to challenge the veracity of miracles or grace emanating from a sacred object. But I believe that it is necessary to elucidate the ways miraculous icons and relics can completely overtake the liturgical cycle of a church. Multitudes of people tend to visit miraculous icons with the hope of receiving a specific miracle, usually the healing of an illness or the gift of conception. If the leaders who arrange such visitations do not manage their words carefully, the icon's symbolism can be reduced to that of a miracle-working machine. The potential pitfalls of such reduced symbolism should be obvious to the reader, but what's really at stake here is the possibility of blurring the distinction between worshipping God or venerating a saint and viewing an object as a tool for solving problems. Several of the essays in this volume point to the question of blurred distinctions by referring to the propensity for copying miraculous icons and the fervor of the devotion surrounding statues. Theological analysis of the contemporary relationship between iconography and liturgy could promote a reinvigorated understanding of the place of icons in the liturgical order in obedience to the theology of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Triumph of Orthodoxy. When an icon or other sacred object becomes a miracle-working tool

primarily and begins to lose its sense of promoting the manifestation of God in the Incarnation, idolatry has reemerged.

DOMESTIC AND LITURGICAL USE OF ICONS

The essays in this volume attend to both domestic and liturgical use of icons. Llywelyn's chapter 6 exposes an instance of liturgical decorum colliding with the veneration of an image with deep cultural roots. Several other essays explore the consistently strong market for obtaining copies of popular originals, epitomized by Our Lady of Guadalupe. The legitimacy of venerating icons at home originates with the Seventh Ecumenical Council itself, and, in principle, there is no tension between the domestic and the liturgical. In chapter 8, Chirovsky points to potential reciprocity between the domestic and the liturgical. For example, should liturgical iconography shape the kinds of icons people venerate at home? Many icons available for purchase are reproductions of those adorning a particular church. Chirovsky raises an important point: many immigrants of the Cold War era were poor and couldn't afford icons, so they adopted images that were accessible to them. Readers might also consider the relevant question of cultural apprehension, that is, the need to design iconographic programs that will communicate a theological truth to the current generation. Llywelyn and Chirovsky point to opportunities for further research in the mutual shaping and formation of domestic and liturgical sacred art, with the possibility of the domestic representing culture and offering models for the liturgy.

ARTISTS AND THE CHURCH

Lucas and Courey, in chapter 2 and 7, respectively, discuss the important role of artists in creating works of art for the Church and her liturgy. Llywelyn refers to the occasionally tenuous relationship between artists and the Church in the Catholic tradition, whereas Orthodoxy has generally favored the formation of artists who produce art from

within the Church in a master/disciple paradigm. The postmodern era has witnessed the appearance of forms that appropriate sacred art but challenge elements of aesthetical tradition, as evidenced by Chirovsky's discussion of Lentz and with the tensions caused by the veneration of Jesús Nazareno in Llywelyn's essay. The world has witnessed icons that employ traditional styles but depict dubious figures, such as Joseph Stalin.

Courey's first-person narrative detailing the art of iconography is a significant contribution in illustrating the master/disciple paradigm and in manifesting the creator of a work of art as an image of the Creator. Scholars might begin to explore the possibility of multiple paradigms developing in the relationship between artists and the Church in the postmodern era, especially as the Catholic and Orthodox churches attempt to respond to contemporary issues impacting society.

KISSING A PICTURE: A NATURAL HUMAN INCLINATION

The broad range of our essays prohibits a concise synthesis pulling everything together, so in conclusion I would like to offer a reflection that I believe represents the Catholic and Orthodox traditions of iconography and sacred art. One trend appears in all of the essays in this volume—the natural human attraction to images. Small children draw pictures expressing their imaginations before they can write in complete sentences. People of all ages look at photos of loved ones over and over again, and kiss them with affection. A lost photo can be the source of despondency. Inspirational photos are copied and reproduced, including iconic images that appear in newspapers and in magazines, such as *Time*. Beloved icons are shared, kissed, and copied, even when the copy quality is questionable. The theological inspiration to come into intimate contact with those who are depicted is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, because the human act of gazing upon an image expresses the desire to be with those who are depicted, in other words, communion. Canons, schools, masters, and conciliar documents might offer guidelines for depicting the women and men whom Christians venerate as the holy people of God, but no decree or directive can govern the

spontaneous movement of the Holy Spirit, who energizes both the one who is depicted and the one who beholds the image. The Spirit's free movement among the peoples of this world will continue to inspire the inexplicable phenomena of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Jesús Nazareno, the Hawaii Iveron icon, and Rublev's *Trinity*, among others. Eastern and Western Christians share this much in common: they owe God an expression of honest thanksgiving for endowing them with the gift of the Holy Spirit and granting them the privilege to lovingly gaze upon and kiss all of the holy ones who are alive in Christ.

NOTES

1. I recall a woman desperately trying to find her favorite icon during Holy Communion at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington, DC, many years ago. She was so determined that she jostled several people in the process and almost knocked the chalice out of the hands of a priest.

2. For background reading on wonder-working icons, see Bissera Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Vera Shevzov, "Icons, Miracles, and the Ecclesial Identity of Laity in Late Imperial Russian Orthodoxy," *Church History* 69, no 3 (2000): 610–31; Jim Forest, "Icons and Miracles: An Intensity of Faith," *Christianity and Crisis* 45, no. 9 (1985): 201–5.

3. For a survey on the translation of relics and their wonder-working powers, see Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 183–88. For a seminal essay on pilgrimage and the veneration of relics, see Pierre Maraval, "The Earliest Phase of Christian Pilgrimage in the Near East (before the 7th Century)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 63–74; for the theological rationale underpinning relic veneration, see Sergius Bulgakov, "On Holy Relics," in *Relics and Miracles: Two Theological Essays*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 2011), 1–40.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Excerpt from the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II, 787), cited from *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:135–36.

Icons like the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways; these are the images of our Lord, God and savior, Jesus Christ and of our Lady without blemish, the holy godbearer [*theotokos*], and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men. The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, and also to the holy books of the gospel and to other sacred cult objects. Further, people are drawn to honor these images with the offering of incense and lights, as was piously established by ancient custom; and he who venerates the images, venerates the person represented in that image.

Appendix B: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*), text of the translation from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. Chapter 7, "Sacred Art and Sacred Furnishings," sections 122–30.

122. Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest activities of man's genius, and this applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands; they achieve their purpose of redounding to God's praise and glory in proportion as they are directed the more exclusively to the single aim of turning men's minds devoutly toward God.

Holy Mother Church has therefore always been the friend of the fine arts and has ever sought their noble help, with the special aim that all things set apart for use in divine worship should be truly worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of the supernatural world, and for this purpose she has trained artists. In fact, the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the right to pass judgment upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws, and thereby fitted for sacred use.

The Church has been particularly careful to see that sacred furnishings should worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship, and has admitted changes in materials, style, or ornamentation prompted by the progress of the technical arts with the passage of time.

Wherefore it has pleased the Fathers to issue the following decrees on these matters.

123. The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own; she has admitted styles from every period according to the natural talents and circumstances of peoples, and the needs of the various rites. Thus, in the course of the centuries, she has brought into being a treasury of art which must be very carefully preserved. The art of our own days, coming from every race and region, shall also be given free scope in the Church, provided that it adorns the sacred buildings and holy rites with due reverence and honor; thereby it is enabled to contribute its own voice to that wonderful chorus of praise in honor of the Catholic faith sung by great men in times gone by.

124. Ordinaries, by the encouragement and favor they show to art which is truly sacred, should strive after noble beauty rather than mere

sumptuous display. This principle is to apply also in the matter of sacred vestments and ornaments.

Let bishops carefully remove from the house of God and from other sacred places those works of artists which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity and pretense.

And when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful.

125. The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.

126. When passing judgment on works of art, local ordinaries shall give a hearing to the diocesan commission on sacred art and, if needed, also to others who are especially expert, and to the commissions referred to in Art. 44, 45, and 46.

Ordinaries must be very careful to see that sacred furnishings and works of value are not disposed of or dispersed; for they are the ornaments of the house of God.

127. Bishops should have a special concern for artists, so as to imbue them with the spirit of sacred art and of the sacred liturgy. This they may do in person or through suitable priests who are gifted with a knowledge and love of art.

It is also desirable that schools or academies of sacred art should be founded in those parts of the world where they would be useful, so that artists may be trained.

All artists who, prompted by their talents, desire to serve God's glory in holy Church, should ever bear in mind that they are engaged in a kind of sacred imitation of God the Creator, and are concerned with works destined to be used in Catholic worship, to edify the faithful, and to foster their piety and their religious formation.

128. Along with the revision of the liturgical books, as laid down in Art. 25, there is to be an early revision of the canons and ecclesiastical statutes which govern the provision of material things involved in sacred worship. These laws refer especially to the worthy and well planned construction of sacred buildings, the shape and construction of altars, the nobility, placing, and safety of the Eucharistic tabernacle, the dignity and suitability of the baptistery, the proper ordering of sacred images, embellishments, and vestments. Laws which seem less suited to the reformed liturgy are to be brought into harmony with it, or else abolished; and any which are helpful are to be retained if already in use, or introduced where they are lacking.

According to the norm of Art. 22 of this Constitution, the territorial bodies of bishops are empowered to adapt such things to the needs and customs of their different regions; this applies especially to the materials and form of sacred furnishings and vestments.

129. During their philosophical and theological studies, clerics are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art, and about the sound principles governing the production of its works. In consequence they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments, and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art.

130. It is fitting that the use of pontificals be reserved to those ecclesiastical persons who have episcopal rank or some particular jurisdiction.

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